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**VÝUKA VIZUÁLNÍ KULTURY POMOCÍ SEMIÓZY:
ZA POSTMODERNÍMI PARADIGMATY VE VÝTVARNÉM VZDĚLÁVÁNÍ**

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VÝUKA VIZUÁLNÍ KULTURY POMOCÍ SEMIÓZY: ZA POSTMODERNÍMI PARADIGMATY VE VÝTVARNÉM VZDĚLÁVÁNÍ

Výtah

Tento výzkum ukazuje, co se stane, když si studenti a učitelé uvědomí, jak v současné společnosti zakódovávají a dekodují vizuální zážitek, a jak ho vztahují k uměleckým prožitkům a postupům. Tato studie zkoumala především to, jak pedagogičtí praktikanti a středoškolští studenti oboru výtvarná výchova interpretují vizuální kulturu a současné umění, když jsou vykládány pomocí vizuální semiózy, zahrnující dialogický průzkum, reflexivní psaní a uměleckou tvorbu. Dotazovaní byli vedeni k tomu, aby si uvědomili a odhalili své myšlenkové pochody a učební postupy tím, že sledují povahu svého vnímání, myšlenek, postojů a přesvědčení. Průzkum se prováděl v letech 2005 – 2008 během čtyř semestrálních seminářů, kde patnáctičlenné skupiny tvořili mezinárodní studenti jak bakalářského, tak magisterského programu, oboru výtvarná výchova na Karlově Univerzitě. Výsledky pak byly shromážděny během dvou sezení se třinácti studenty oboru Vizuální kultury na Západočeské univerzitě v Plzni. Sezení zahrnovala i galerijní výstavy v Praze doplněné čtením a uměleckou tvorbou. Doplnující údaje byly nashromážděny českými středoškolskými studenty (108) během výstavy *Uncertain States of America* v Galerii Rudolfinum v Praze. Studie ukazuje, že je možné konstruktivním způsobem sloučit poznatky postmodernismu, sémiotiky a kritické teorie, a vyřešit tak bezvýhodnou situaci, do které nás tyto diskurzy přivedly svým chápáním výuky umění.

Pozadí studie

Současný diskurz ve výtvarném vzdělávání získal během posledních pětadvaceti let nové perspektivy pod vlivem postmodernismu, kulturních a vizuálních studií, kritické teorie, sémiotiky, feministické kritiky, gender studies, multikulturního vzdělávání a filmové teorie. Kognitivní výzkum v 80. a 90. letech pomohl přesunout zájem učitelů výtvarného umění z přístupů, které se soustředily na dítě a jeho chování, k přístupům kognitivním, které namísto toho zdůrazňovaly obsah specifický pro danou oblast (Efland, 1995; Short, 1995). V dnešní době, kdy do škol přichází tzv. „Net Generation“ (Plenka, 2007), jejíž život utváří přemedializované, interaktivní a rušné prostředí, je důležité mladým lidem – a jejich učitelům – pomoci pochopit, jak systémy kódování a značení fungují, a jaký význam jim je v jejich životě přikládán (Tipton, 2007). Někdy mohou systémy kódování sloužit jako skryté kliše (Slavík, 2006). Ačkoliv by se dalo tvrdit, že je vizuální kultura součástí jakékoli historičnosti umění, dílo Paula Duncuma rámující vizuální kulturu a jeho příspěvek pro Visual Culture Art Education (VCAE) z roku 2002 ji staví do rozrůstající se sítě interdisciplinárních vztahů, což ovlivnilo posun ve výukových a vzdělávacích procesech ve výtvarném vzdělávání (Duncum, 2003; Freedman, 2003; Hernandez, 2000; Smith-Shank, 2004, Tavin, 2003; etc.). Rozpad tradičního rozdělení mezi objektem/subjektem a tím, co je považováno

za vizualitu, zpochybňuje fundamentální obsah a praktiky vzdělávání výtvarného umění. Následkem toho zůstává nejasné, co vlastně vizuální kultura je, a jakým způsobem ji učit (Dikovitskaya, 2005).

Přístupovat k vizuální kultuře pomocí studia současného umění je jeden z přístupů, které pro výuku vizuální kultury popisuje Duncum (2003). Nicméně v praxi je současné umění jako prostor pro kritickou vizuální kulturu zdůrazňováno již méně. Současná soustředěnost akademiků na kritickou pedagogiku, jako na prostředníka mezi teorií a praxí, vedla k důrazu na zkoumání textů místo toho, aby se pozornost věnovala tvůrčím významotvorným systémům, v kterých tyto texty fungují a vznikají (Arguire, 2005). To, co tyto diskurzy postrádají, je ukázka toho, jak vlastně systémy kódování a procesy interpretace, které jedinec používá při svém utváření vědomostí, fungují za praktických pedagogických podmínek. Rozhodla jsem se tuto otázku prozkoumat na úrovni pedagogické praxe studentů výtvarné výchovy magisterského i bakalářského programu.

Shrnutí výzkumného modelu

Jako teoretický model byl vybrán kvalitativní výzkum s konstruktivistickou perspektivou, jelikož jeho základním předpokladem je to, že rysy sociálního prostředí jsou utvářeny individuálními interpretacemi, které jsou jak situační, tak přechodné. Relevantní k tomuto kritickému aspektu kvalitativního výzkumu výtvarného vzdělávání (Sullivan, 2005; Irwin & de Cosson, 2004; Bresler, 2006) je Wilsonův (1997) upravený postup, při kterém badatel používá metodu introspekce, podobnou té, kterou zastával Galbraith (1993). Dialogickým postům, jednomu z aspektů kvalitativní metodologie, ale nebyla věnována dostatečná pozornost (Bresler, 2006). Tato studie vytváří prostor pro zařazení dialogického průzkumu do metody kvalitativního bádání.

Jelikož jsou údaje zprostředkovávány skrze lidského činitele, je kladen důraz na badatelovo stanovisko, odbornost a zkušenost, což potvrzuje opodstatněnost rozvinutých teorií jako je posun rolí účastníka, umělce, učitele a badatele (Irwin, et. Al, 2006). Moje vlastní vizuální etnografie, poznámky z terénu a reflektivní popis událostí doplňují texty účastníků, a tak podporují kvalitativní rámec této studie o participační akční výzkum. Tento výzkum předpokládá, že realita není objektivní pravda nebo souhrn skutečností, které mají být odhaleny, ale zahrnuje způsoby, jakými lidé, pojící se k daným skutečnostem, tyto skutečnosti vnímají. „Subjekty“ této studie, které obvykle bývají vyloučeny z procesu utváření znalostí, se této studie účastní ze svého vlastního „stanoviska“ (Harding, 1993).

K tomu, aby mohlo být probádáno vzájemné působení faktorů ve výuce vizuální kultury a

současného umění v přirozeném prostředí, byly vybrány výzkumné metody terénních studií akčního výzkumu, dialogický průzkum a reflektivní postup jako a/r/tografie, a neo-vyprávění pomocí interpretačních případových studií (case studies).

A/r/tografie je kvalitativní metodologie založená na praktickém výzkumu (Sullivan, 2004), která chápe teorii jako ztělesnění skutečného zkoumání, který se neustále vyvíjí (Irwin et.al., 2006). Neo-vyprávění, neboli nové příběhy, jsou tvořeny interaktivní analýzou a rozvinutím vyprávění o tom, co se podle zainteresovaných lidí vlastně přihodilo (Stewart, 1997, p. 224). Pedagogický plán využíval sémiotický spolu-konstruktivismus, který je neomezený, vzájemně související, nelineární, rozličný a *rhizomatický* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Toto hledisko vytváří prostor pro kreativní myšlení, a pro to, aby se něco nového mohlo projevit i jako analytická konvergence, a ne výhradně lineárnost.

V této studii je *vizuální semióza* definována jako interpretační systém pro zkoumání triadického vztahu mezi znakovými systémy, kódy znázornění a významotvornými procesy v rámci socio-kulturního systému, ve kterém působí. *Dialogický průzkum* je převzat z děl Wellse (1999) a Bohma (1994), kde jsou pro tvorbu významu kriticky používány individuální a skupinové diskurzivní styly. Bohm tvrdí, že zkoumání fungování myšlenek je proces – *movement of becoming*. *Reflexivní postup* zkoumá materiální myšlenkové procesy, rozvíjí vnitřní dialog a využívá *zkušenostní inteligenci* k vytváření intuitivních souvislostí (Perkins, 1994).

Stanovení problému a otázky výzkumu

Porozumět osobním systémům kódování a interpretačním, významotvorným procesům je základním aspektem budování si znalostí na základě zkušeností s vizuální kulturou a současným uměním. Nedostatkem v praxi ve vzdělávání vizuální kultury a umění, zejména tedy v pedagogice praktikantů, je nedostatečné následování postupů, které přivádí studenty i učitele k tomu, aby si uvědomili, jak v současné společnosti zakódovat a dekodovat zážitek – tzv. vizuální semióza.

Jak si pedagogičtí praktikanti uvědomují vzájemné sémiotické vztahy uvnitř svých vlastních významotvorných strategií a postupů? Kontext skrývající se za touto otázkou předpokládá, že výuka vizuální kultury pomocí pedagogiky vizuální semiózy vyžaduje strategie pro metakognici vlastního vnímání (propriocepce) myšlení. *Propriocepce myšlení* je metaúrovňový proces, doprovázející strukturu myšlenky tím, že podněcuje uvědomění si vytváření, použití a toku myšlenek. Pedagogičtí praktikanti mají tendence používat ve třídě metody, kterými jsou sami školeni (Milbrandt & Klein, 2008). Uvědomit si tuto nenaplněnou potřebu prostřednictvím pedagogické praxe je celkovým

zásahem do učebního plánu vizuální kultury na školách všech úrovní. Tyto nenaplněné potřeby vedly ke zkoumání následujících otázek:

- Jaký dopad má výuka vizuální kultury prostřednictvím pedagogiky vizuální semiózy na smyslové vnímání a poznání vizuálních prožitků praktikujících studentů výtvarné výchovy?
- Co dialogický průzkum a reflexivní postupy odhalují o schopnostech praktikantů výtvarné výchovy zakódovat a dekodovat zásadní zkušenosti s vizuální kulturou?
- Jaký vliv mají názory a očekávání vztahující se k výtvarnému umění na interpretaci zkušeností s vizuální kulturou?

Pedagogický a výzkumný plán

Vizuální kultura, v seminářích praktikantů bakalářského/magisterského programu, byla vyučována prostřednictvím různých vizuálních prožitků současného umění, mezi které patří prostředí galerie, obrázky v médiích a reklamách, kritické čtení, reflexivní psaní, umělecké činnosti a studentské prezentace v kontextu dialogického průzkumu.

Při výuce vizuální kultury pomocí interpretačního systému vizuální semiózy bylo čerpáno z děl týkajících se „mnohogramotnosti“ (multiliteracies) a dialogického průzkumu (Cope & Kalazantis, 2000; Duncum, 2004; Matthews, 2005), z pedagogických postupů situační metody, konstruktivismu, kritického průzkumu a „transformovaného postupu“ (transformed practice). Narativní metody (reflexivní psaní a poznámky z terénu) a interpretační případové studie počítají se zapojením meta-reflexe, dialogického průzkumu a umělecké činnosti jako prostředků k problematizaci umění a vytváření prostoru pro nový výzkum (Sullivan, 2004).

Účastníci a prostředí

Hlavní výzkumnou skupinu tvořilo 15 studentů-praktikantů oboru výtvarná výchova na Pedagogické fakultě. Výzkum probíhal v letech 2005-2008 během čtyř semestrálních seminářů. Vedle této hlavní výzkumné skupiny byla ještě skupina třinácti studentů bakalářského oboru Vizuální kultura se zaměřením na vzdělávání na Západočeské univerzitě v Plzni, která se účastnila dvou tříhodinových sezení. Dále zde bylo sedm skupin (108) středoškolských studentů z pražského Gymnázia Na Zatlance, které se účastnily dvou 60-90-ti minutových setkání na výstavě *Uncertain States of America* (2007-2008) v prostoru pro současné výtvarné umění Galerii Rudolfinum. Čtyři z těchto sedmi skupin pak pokračovaly dvěma 60-90-ti minutovými sezeními v prostorách gymnázia.

Metody při sběru dat

Moje data obsahují jak badatelovy poznámky z dialogických sezení, tak dotazníky, reflexivní psaní, cvičné archy a sebehodnocení samotných studentů. Studenti bakalářského i magisterského programu nashromáždili jak v Praze, Plzni, tak i Galerii Rudolfinum různé druhy reflexivního psaní in situ a cvičné archy. Vizuální antropologie byla sestavena na základě studentských uměleckých děl a médií, výstav výtvarného umění, dokumentace digitálních fotografií a obrázků v masmédiích.

Analýza dat

Texty (100), které praktikanti napsali, byly s pomocí kvalitativního softwaru na zpracování dat *ATLAS.ti* nakódovány podle míry jejich důležitosti pro otázky výzkumu. *ATLAS.ti* (vědecký software) pak vygeneroval četnost výskytu kódů a mapy symbolů. Použitím přístupu zakotvené teorie (Charmaz, 2004), bylo 116 kódů z pěti datových jednotek pedagogické praxe spojeno v síť kódů, ze které se vyvinuly superkódy a tématické kategorie. (Dvě doplňující datové jednotky s texty středoškolských studentů byly sice zaznamenány, ale počítačem dále nezpracovány.) Kritérii pro výběr textových úryvků pomocí kódování a jejich zařazení do sítě kódů byly mj. četnost výskytu a typy diskurzu. Diskurzy byly rozpoznávány a analyzovány s použitím analýzy kritického diskurzu, nazývané kritická společenská semiotika, která přiřazuje semiotickou teorii ke klíčovým sociálním a kritickým teoriím vizuální kultury prostřednictvím víceúčelových forem komunikace (Caldas-Coulthard & Van Leeuwen, 2003; Gee, 2003).

Ve čtyřech jednotkách pedagogické praxe (HU2-5) se konsistentně a často vyskytovalo 11 kódů – (25%+) *krása, změna, odlišný, vliv, informace, otevřený, struktura, rozumět, smysl, mělo by, a znak*. Superkódy jsou dotazy vytvořené jinými kódy. Síť superkódů z diskurzní analýzy odpovídajících citací byly tyto: *politika identity; nezbytná přítomnost krásy?; odhalení mocenských vztahů; struktura vlivu; mezi těmito dvěma nedostatky; něco, co uniká; utváření spojitostí; přestavění prostoru; přítomnost soch; a síť vztahů*.

Na základě analýzy kódů a superkódů bylo rozeznáno šest hlavních typů diskurzu: *kulturní sebelokalizace, mocenské vztahy, konjekturální, psané kompoziční metodou palimpsestu, transpozice, a profesionalizující vyprávění*. Na základě rozložení, ve kterém se střídaly oblasti kódování, teorie, meta-reflexe, dialogické postupy, hlasy studentů a badatele byla vytvořena neo-vyprávění.

Výsledky zkoumání

Studenti mají vizuální preference, které jsou individuální a často založené na okamžitém prožitku. Jedna ze studentů, Černochová, píše:

Nejdříve se na to podívám a rozhodnu, jestli se mi to po emocionální stránce líbí nebo ne. Pak to srovnám s věcmi, které jsem už předtím viděla. Pokouším se zjistit, co se mi to snaží sdělit (nebo divákům) a pak se pokouším zjistit, jakým způsobem mi to sděluje. (HU5, P64: Černochová, 2007)

Ve všech jednotkách je většina odpovědí podobných této, kterou zformuloval Del Priore (2007), „Mám-li se v každodenním životě rozhodnout, zda je pro mě dané umění dobré, musím cítit, že se mě něčím dotklo.“ Na úrovni vysokoškolského studia se může počáteční prožitek snadno a rychle zaměnit s myšlenkami ostatních. V rámci stejných dialogických výměn středoškolských studentů byly okamžité dojmy méně náchylné ke změně, a zdály se tak být stabilnější. Preference z hlediska pohlaví byly mezi středoškoláky i vysokoškoláky patrné z výběru obrázků, o kterých měli studenti mluvit a/nebo psát.

Můj způsob myšlení je v podstatě svázán se všemi mými zkušenostmi. Proto, když se dívám na umělecké dílo, nebo když chci nějaké vytvořit, tak začínám u svých pocitů. (HU5, P2: Tanret, 2006).

Nahlíží-li se na vizuální kulturu z hlediska vytváření si vztahu ke své vlastní vizuálnosti pomocí dialogických a reflexivních postupů, je možné vytvořit vzájemný vztah mezi myšlením, vnímáním a prožitkem. K tomu, abychom mohli pojmut měnící se soulad mezi zdrojem znaků, jejich znázorněním a systémy interpretace, bylo zapotřebí klást důraz na propriocepci myšlení prostřednictvím pedagogiky semiózy. Tímto postupem si praktikanti byli schopni prověřovat, odhadovat a restrukturalizovat své prožitky ve styku s vizuální kulturou současného umění.

Bere-li se v úvahu způsob, *jak systémy kódování fungují*, a přikládá-li se hlasům studentů stejná váha jako hlasům odborníků, teoretiků, umělců a jiných jednotlivců, pak se tím spojují v čase i prostoru různé teoretické tradice, přístupy, záznamy a disciplíny. Jeden německý student magisterského oboru tak píše o využití umělecké tvorby v seminářích vizuální kultury:

To, že sám vytvářím umělecká díla vedle současného umění ostatních umělců, více zdůrazňuje jejich rozdílnost či rovnocennost. Cítil jsem silnější motivaci pochopit díla jiných umělců s cílem zdokonalit a lépe pochopit své vlastní umění skrze tyto nové myšlenky. (HU5, P14: Malek, 2007)

Znalosti jsou nezbytné, ale ještě důležitější je nalézt spojitost s jejich funkcí a užitím skrze odpověď na Sedwickovu otázku (2003) „k čemu *nám jsou znalosti*?“ *Trojité (trinality)* diskurzy, odkrývající fungování mocenských vztahů v socio-kulturní sféře, jsou prvořadé ve světě, kde činnosti

ekonomiky založené na vědomostech často vymezují ty, které se nacházejí uvnitř systému, bez ohledu na tyto otázky. Trojitě diskurzy se tak stávají součástí hledání „vedlejšího místa“ v dualistickém myšlení. Umění toto místo zabírá a naplňuje.

Výuka vizuální kultury pro pedagogické praktikanty prostřednictvím kritických pedagogik dialogického průzkumu a reflexivního postupu v rámci konstruktivistického plánu zdůrazňuje, jaké souvislosti studenti vnášejí do zkušeností s učebním plánem. Malek, jenž si uvědomuje důležitost individuální volby a záměru jako základního aspektu utváření a užití vědomostí, tvrdí:

Reflexivní postup přidává mému myšlení nové pohledy na myšlení a vnímání. Tím, že se myšlenky zapíší, se myšlení stává významnější a závažnější. Zároveň to vyžaduje odvahu tyto myšlenky napsat, protože není zcela běžné o takovýchto pochodech mluvit. Reflexivní postup tak umožňuje si tento vývoj uvědomit a ukazuje, že se mohou postoje i myšlení měnit, a že myšlení proto není jednoznačné. (HU5, P14: Malek, 2007)

Na základě tohoto chápání mohou znalosti, jež se vytvářejí podle vědeckého paradigmatu *sine qua non* vědění, „ustoupit“ a zaujmout místo uvnitř kruhu širších diskurzů. Přeměna začíná rozpoznáním příležitostí pro rekontextualizaci a revitalizaci namísto pouhé revitalizace. Abychom nesklouzli do změti podobnosti mezi všemi vizuálnostmi, je zapotřebí si neustále připomínat, že základem pro výtvarné vzdělávání je výtvarné umění samo. Umění lze vyučovat, pěstovat, směřovat, podporovat i brzdit. Ale to, co si umění žádá a potřebuje, je ho *dělat*.

Tvořivost závisí na výjimkách jednotlivých případů, nekategorických souvislostí a anomáliích v průběhu vývoje a vytváření nových spojitostí a rozdílů.

Schopnost mluveného projevu odhalit moc současného umění a kultury spočívá v jeho interakci, různorodém propojení s ostatními oblastmi a v symbolickém kódování, které se rozvíjí, dekoduje a restrukturalizuje tak, že nakonec přesahuje původní znalost a dá z jejich vzájemné souhry vznik nové znalosti a prožitku. (Fulkova and Tipton, 2008, p. 39)

Závěry

Dnešní výtvarné umění je spíše událostí než prožíváním objektů. Stejně jako uplatňování pravidel jedné kategorie k posudku obsahu kategorie druhé, aniž by byly dohodnuty shodné aspekty (Goodman & Elgin, 1988) představuje zásadní problém klasifikace, tak i dnešní pedagogové se potýkají s problémem chybějící spojitosti mezi dřívějšími hodnotícími a interpretačními pojetími a vizuální kulturou současného umění. Zatímco se význam, hodnoty, prostředky a metody umění a jeho výroby a spotřeby drasticky změnily, dnešní výtvarné vzdělávání ještě stále používá

modernistickou pedagogiku a modely založené na postojích filozofie 17. století, a vykládá tak jimi jevy, které v nich vůbec nemohou být zahrnuté.

Tím, že se tato studie řídí Duncumovou výzvou k novému přístupu a paradigmatu ve výtvarném vzdělávání (2002), přispívá tak dále k profesionalizaci diskurzů o důležitosti restrukturalizace výtvarného vzdělávání a učebního plánu pro pedagogické praktikanty prostřednictvím přijetí jiných přístupů s kritickým zaměřením na vizuální kulturu. Důraz na individuální vizuální postupy tak vnáší novou životní sílu do procesu zapojení se do vytváření nových socio-kulturních teorií a vizuálností současných zažitých zkušeností, zatímco tak bude jednotlivcům umožněno aby k nim sami přispívali.

Zkušenosti se současnou vizuální kulturou, která je přeformulována v dialogickém kontextu, nejen dekodují a zakódovávají informace, ale také odhalují, co je známo a jak se to proměňuje v rámci sebe samého, v kontaktu s ostatními a v kontextu sociální sféry. Tímto dílem bych ráda nabídla nový pohled a novou hloubku otázkám minulým, tím, že osvětlím nové možnosti v otázkách budoucích. Nikdy předtím v dějinách lidstva nebyla naše schopnost vlastního přerodu a přerodu našeho světa tak naléhavá – a tak dosažitelná. Svou práci věnuji jako součást tohoto vývoje zrodu a růstu výtvarného vzdělávání – neboli jeho *movement of becoming*.

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Teresa M. Tipton

**Teaching Visual Culture Through Semiosis:
Transforming Postmodern Paradigms
in Arts Education**

Dissertation Thesis

**Pedagogical Faculty
Department of Art Education
Charles University, Prague
Czech Republic**

November 2008

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ABSTRACT

This research study demonstrates what happens when students and preteachers of art become aware of how they encode and decode visual experience in contemporary society, and how they relate these experiences to artistic practice. The study inquired into how pre-service teachers and high school students of art/education interpret visual culture and contemporary art when it is taught through a process of visual semiosis, involving dialogic inquiry, reflective writing, and art-making. Participants in the study were encouraged to become aware of and reveal their own thinking and learning processes by examining the nature of their perceptions, ideas, attitudes, and beliefs. Participatory Action Research (PAR) was conducted between 2005-2008 during four, semester-long seminars with an internationally mixed group of (15) under/graduate students of art/education at Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic and collected from two sessions with (13) Visual Culture students at the University of Western Bohemia, Plzeň, Czech Republic. Sessions included contemporary gallery exhibitions in Prague with critical theory texts, dialogic and written reflections, and art-making activities. Additional data was gathered with (108) Czech high school students at the Galerie Rudolfinum, Prague during the exhibition: *Uncertain States of America*. By considering visual culture as a process of relationship building to one's own visuality and voice, visual semiotics becomes a powerful tool for delving underneath and beyond the surface of thinking, theory, and perceptions to a meta-cognition of their components. The study demonstrates that it is possible to incorporate the insights of postmodernism, semiotics and critical theory in a constructivist way, transforming established understandings of how art should be taught.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I first visited Prague in the early 90's to investigate a restituted building as a site for an international arts center. That brief visit forged my friendship with artists Mirek and Iva Vodrázka, who inspired me with a lasting admiration and respect for the Czech artists. Iva is a rare art educator who has not sacrificed her own art in order to teach in the after-school program of Základní Umělecká Škola, Prague. To the 're/naissance' musician and writer Mirek Vodrázka, who gained a certain fame as an underground dissident after being filmed playing the piano with his feet, I am grateful for the untiring and inspiring example of how to cook up defiance (along with good food). Mirek showed me why it is essential to feed the soul along with the body when committing acts of integrity against oppression

On another visit in the mid-'90s, I had the good fortune to be introduced to Dr. Marie Fulková from the Department of Art Education at Charles University, Prague by Pavla Jonsonnová. Over the ensuing years of our conversations and projects together, Dr. Fulková has remained a formative and collaborative influence in my work. Through our collegiality, I found open-ended opportunities to synthesize the strands of thought that emerge together here.

I was fortunate to be able to work with complete freedom and autonomy within the Pedagogical Faculty of Charles University. In addition, my research was not limited by public education policies prohibiting references to nudity, religion, or overt references to political content within visual images shown to students or discussed with them.

Among the faculty of the Department of Art Education, I am indebted to Pavel Šamšula, Dr. Jan Slavík, Dr. Ivan Špírk, Dr. Lucie Tartarová, and Dr. Helena Hazuková who contributed their support. My special and heartfelt gratitude goes to Dr. Slavík, whose advocacy for my initial acceptance in the doctoral program made it possible for me to study there and who participated in my research in Plzeň. To the scholars and mentors

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I want to acknowledge the staff of the Galerie Rudolfinum, who provided gallery support, exhibition materials, teaching opportunities, and copyright permissions. Special thanks go especially to Director Petr Nedoma for his artistic vision and to Education Director, Marion Pliska and the Open Dialogue Club for programs materials and staff assistance. During my first visit to the Galerie Rudolfinum's 'inner sanctum,' I sat behind a coffee table that was the last remaining relic of Heidrich's former occupancy there and looked at a catalogue of Shomei Tomatsu's photography – material that would become an exhibition of his work there two years later. The combination of these two events at the same time left a memorable impression that the enduring impact of art is not in its redemption of the past, but in its power to remake the present. This 'double-coding' has been a constant inspiration for me while in Prague, and it has been one of the captivating aspects of being associated with Czech Republic.

Thanks go to Dr. Lenka Kitzbergová for incorporating my research project into her high school art classes and museum visits; and to my colleagues Pavla Cernochová, who provided photo documentation at the Galerie Rudolfinum during my "Uncertain State of America" visits with students from Gymnasium Na Zatlance. Thanks go to Dasa Fuxová, who videotaped the latter visit and consulted on the triangulation of my research codes.

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but submitted documentation from the art exhibition she created for demonstration of learning at the end of the semester instead.

Most of all, I owe thanks and gratitude to my family and parents - Dr. Charles M. Tipton and Betty S. Tipton whose tireless expectations for my scholarship and academic success began at an early age [Figure 1].



Figure 1: Artbook. Tipton (2007)

Over the years of my doctoral study, during long walks along the arroyos of Tucson, Arizona when I visited there, my father's questions sharpened my thinking, ensuring that my approach and concepts were clearly arguable. To my mother Betty Tipton, I am grateful for consistent support, encouragement, and her clever 'devil's advocate' approach when it was needed the most. Her own research into family genealogy during this time illuminated some of the historical precedents for my own research. To both my parents from whom I gained an early love of learning, forthrightness, and independence, I am deeply grateful [Figure 2].

I want to use this occasion to remember my grandmother Mary Elizabeth White Tipton, who inspired me through her own college study when few women of her time in America pursued this path. If there is an equivalent of a cultural heritage passed down genetically, or a 'meme' as Ken Wilber suggests (2000), then certainly my own family and cultural heritage is visible in mine. And to my dear friend and companion, the late screenwriter and director Nate Long, who started me on this journey to understand what he often stated, "All words and images are neutral" – *gassho!*



Figure 2: Dr. & Mrs. C. M. Tipton, 2007

PROLOGUE

My initial research began with a focus on developing a model for integrating art across the curriculum with pre-service generalist and specialist teachers of art. While I was trained in discipline-based arts education (DBAE), my own shift into visual cultural art education (VCAE) began when I started considering artworks not only as *objects*, but as sources of *visual information*. This opened my borders to what and where art could be located. I became interested in the concept that the brain organizes and processes information through signs, making semiosis inherently physiological as well as cognitive (Favareau, 2000). Thus, restructuring the concepts and language used to speak about art was necessary to accommodate the changing correspondences between the source of signs, their exemplification, and systems of interpretation.

With the rapid appearance of published work in this area, (i.e. Freedman, 2003; Tavin, 2003; Smith-Shank, 2004; Duncum, 2004; etc.), my emphasis shifted from teaching visual culture per se to questioning the relationship between how individual thoughts operate and are constructed through sensory perceptions and cognitions of visual events. This emphasis shifts attention to a process instead of solely interpreting and analyzing objects. I was interested in how both are influenced by a visual semiosis. As I shifted from object-centered discourse to considering visual culture as inquiry processes of relationship building, the application of semiotics to arts education became a powerful tool for delving underneath the surface of terminology, theory, and pedagogy to a meta-cognition of their components. Thus, re-conceptualizing relationships that are designed as meaningful encounters with visual culture became a necessary starting place for my intention to develop a new praxis in arts education. This study demonstrates what happens when students and teachers alike are engaged in a process of understanding how they encode and decode visual experience in contemporary society and when they relate this semiotic to artistic experiences and practice.

Since the inception of this project, I have been gratified to see that others have been making their way back to the concept of integrating art across the curriculum (Vidiella & Hernández, 2006), by using visual culture. Just as a rhizome works more through a confluence of events than a predetermined operating system Deleuze & Guattari (1987) too is the field of arts education finding new forms of life practice. It is to this ongoing new praxis in the field that my doctoral work is dedicated.

*

Because arts education may include media arts, dance, music, theatre, interdisciplinary collaborations, or be primarily focused on visual arts, I refer to 'visual arts education' as a realm within the overall field which designates visuality as the focus of my study. At times I intentionally distinguish between visual culture arts education and the field-specific domain of arts education as a whole.' Because the word 'America' is often erroneously used to signify only the USA, eliminating 'other' Americans in North, South and Central America, I minimize its use and replace America with 'USA' when referencing this country.

In the Czech Republic, the Educational Framework for Art and Culture (2006) specifies the two disciplines of music and visual arts, but I do not specifically address music competencies. There is a well-developed and popular system of after-school arts programs and community resources in the Czech Republic which includes theatre-arts, dance, media, music, and visual arts (See Anderson & Fulková, 2005; Slavík, 2006, 2007). While I draw upon images from Czech primary and secondary students from some of these programs and I believe that visual culture can be addressed in 'other' art areas, my study is specific to visual culture through the visual arts.

The work I present straddles both the context of arts education within the United States, which remains a formidable influence on my thinking and approach, and the realm of professionalized arts education within the European Union, specifically the Czech Republic. Because of my own cultural background, I certainly draw upon cross-cultural differences that are apparent to me in my research analysis, especially as it pertains to Czech students and teachers' perceptions of American contemporary art in the *Uncertain*

States of America exhibit. A cross-cultural emphasis is implicit in my observations; it also shapes and situates my own voice also living and teaching outside of the United States for the past ten years in Africa, China, and the Czech Republic, studying in Greece and Italy, Japan and Brazil, and traveling extensively. Some of my comments and findings will reflect cross-cultural differences between the students who participated in the study from the Czech Republic and from other European universities. As I point out elsewhere, there is a persistent need to redefine inclusion in terms of individual experience and not types, gender, abilities, or ethnicities of individuals (Tipton, 2006, 2007). A specific interest in cross-cultural comparisons would have taken the data analysis in a different direction. While generalizations are apparent in any theorizing and findings, it is my hope that this work will have a *transnational* application without erasing or minimizing the particular challenges each national context presents to this possibility.

The texts by students are not always grammatically correct, and I sometimes alter their written comments with changes inside parentheses. These marks are distinguished from their own use of adding words inside brackets. Additionally, some texts include non-verbal pauses represented by ellipses (i.e.....). Because of their resemblance of editorial deletions, I extended these ellipses to five periods – instead of three or four used to designate editing deletions. I have tried to leave their voices intact, which is the students' own experience. We join them in this endeavor by engaging in their voice as it is. Finally, because there is no consistency across the Atlantic between reference systems, I chose to use the APA reference system as a model for preparing submissions to professional journals and conferences in North America.

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Over the past twenty-five years, contemporary discourse in arts education has gained new perspectives from the impact of postmodernism, culture and visual studies, critical theory, semiotics, feminist criticism, gender studies, multicultural education, and film theory. Cognitive research in the '80s and '90s helped to refashion how arts educators conceived of and visualized models of learning and knowledge-building, moving away from the behaviorism of child-centered expressionism to cognitive models emphasizing domain-specific content (Efland, 1995; Short, 1995). New research in cognitive science points towards replacing 'cause and effect' theories of visual perception with models that are holographic in nature (Grof & Bennett, 1993). As Solso (1993) describes, what is seen is to a large degree determined by our knowledge of what we think should be seen (p. 74).

At the same time, critical changes to our ideas about knowledge-building are coming from learners themselves. Defying learning theory in extremes on either end of sine curves, today's students are savvy about forms of knowing and skills on the periphery of educational practice. Often standing in opposition to traditional learning models, standardized testing, and assessment criteria, today's 'Net Generation' (Plenka, 2007) seems to have no place in a system of education that cannot keep pace with changes that have already occurred outside of its institutionalized settings. Within the media-rich, interactive and on-the-go context that forms the fabric of their lives, it is important to enable young people – and their teachers - to understand signifying systems with which they may not be familiar, but which operate and perhaps dominate in their lives (Tipton, 2007).

Our knowledge of how the brain are conditioned to think about what the eyes and body perceive, and how these systems work together, has dramatically changed in the past twenty-five years (Kindler, 2003; MacLean, 1990; Sternberg, 2003). As a result, learning theory has moved from a behavioral approach to a cognitive one. In arts education, this

has been represented by a shift from child-centered approaches to a domain-specific and content orientation influencing DBAE and critical theory approaches to art education. Within this context, since the early 1980's, visual culture has appeared as a new field for the study of the cultural construction of the visual in the arts, media, and everyday life (Dikovitskaya, 2005, p. 1). While visual culture has emerged as a hybrid, interdisciplinary field over the past twenty-five years, the debate over its definition and implications for teaching and learning in arts education remains considerable. Confusion between visual studies as a field of study and visual culture as the object of study (Mitchell 2002) cannot be clarified by definitions alone. What makes the inclusion of visual culture in traditional arts education so problematic is the breakdown of the historical distinction between object/subject that formed the foundation of current arts education practice.

It is visual culture's re-conceptualization of what is considered knowledge – especially visual knowledge - how it is produced and understood, and why, and under what conditions and for whom it is used, that poses the greatest challenge to the foundational content and practice of visual arts education. While arts education as a domain has long since left the confines of art history narratives as *a priori* knowledge, it finds itself uncomfortably inside a new realm that it still seeks to understand. While grappling with the discipline's own persistent marginality, the arts education community is relocating itself in relationship to content, structure, and epistemology.

The signifying terms and processes that were once the preserve of art historians, critics and scholars have now been contested so thoroughly that critique from a variety of perspectives is almost accepted, even if the language of our discussions still reflects the hegemony of academic linguistic argument according to the rules of binary logic. Moreover, the domain that was once sacrosanct to academics, scholars, teachers, and even artists, is now widely accessible through a variety of instant digital technologies, disseminating voices and images for anyone across time and space, and individuals require no particular expertise to make themselves known or heard in the field. The intersection of all of these factors creates a feeling of discipline-based vertigo. As such, I

do not attempt to thoroughly address all of these intersecting issues and factors. Instead, I draw attention to them as contextual factors influencing my own thinking and research decisions.

While the disciplinary debate remains whether or how visual culture displaces or enhances arts education, there is a distinct lack of pedagogical emphasis on the processes by which individuals come to their own meanings and interpretations in visual encounters. In the domain-specific debate, Efland (1995) posits generalizations about curriculum that are not specific to the dimensionalities of age, method of instruction or context of learning or the learner. Instead, his critique is waged from the pedagogical standpoint of transmission curriculum, and many of his arguments reflect this. Indeed, as used by La Porte, Speirs, & Young (2008), curriculum in art education is still defined as course content and implementation, and these matters are determined by external and internal factors that operate between social and political institutions and teachers. While constructivist theories have been developed in tandem with learning theory and cognitive science, reference is rarely made to the inclusion of learners as co-creators of content in a learning process that they experience. I suggest that an analysis more probing and meaningful than the recognition of learner subjectivities is required.

The current academic focus on critical pedagogy as a mediator between theory and practice has tended to emphasize the interrogation of texts instead of engaging with the creative meaning-making systems within which these texts function and have emerged (Arguirre, 2005). Less clear is how critical pedagogy is linked to the actual socio-cultural conditions within which the institutional setting is situated. Without understanding how sign systems function through interpretive frameworks from the individual's own coding preferences and styles of knowledge construction, proposed new pedagogical models tend towards exteriorizing visual culture with methods that self-reflexively adhere to social reconstructivist and emancipatory theories. What is missing in these discourses is a demonstration of how an understanding of students' processes of knowledge construction functions and works under practical pedagogical conditions. This issue is particularly

crucial given the pervasiveness of various forms of censorship in many institutional settings.

Successful models that support implementation of resignifying concepts and structures within existing K-12 arts education contexts, however rare, are the vanguard of change (Duncum, 2006). While primary and secondary lesson plans containing examples of visual culture activities tend to be written within existing curricular frameworks (Hermann, 2005), there is little active exploration of the operation of multiple sign systems in an individual's experiences of visual culture and contemporary art. If effective pedagogy is a cultural practice reflecting the rules and strategies of power (Shutkin, 2004), *empowerment* becomes a pedagogical necessity.

While semiotics is an established discipline linked to linguistics, its relationship to visuality is less recognized. As Smith-Shank (2004) notes, "...there is no more appropriate vehicle for understanding visual information than semiotics" (p. vii). Her early work linking semiotics to art education in 1995 and her own call for a semiotic pedagogy have been either misrepresented by a narrow structuralist view of semiotics, or ignored completely. Whereas the situation of individuals inundated daily with visual imagery and symbols forms the basis of many 'shoulds' for visual culture theorists, scholars, and educators, there is little work being done at a curricular level on how to interpret and thus render meaning from these signs intentionally according to one's own preferences.

The prevalent view in visual culture art education literature reflects the critical theory position that interpretation is already coded by scholars or theorists. Research studies tend to support these interpretations in curriculum as projects or themes that students explore and extend in validation of critical theory positions (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004). I shift this focus to developing a pedagogical process through which individual – not universalized, standardized, or totalized - meaning is revealed and engaged with by learners as participants in the interpretive process, attending to the constitutive factors of

how they code contemporary visual encounters – what I have come to call a visual semiotic.

Finding and exploring relationships to one's thoughts as constellations comes from paying attention to the process of thinking and its contents, what the physicist Bohm (1994) called a *proprioception of thought*. At this juncture, there are mutually interrelated and interdependent processes at work, a fluid and formative field, where new information is not stored in the brain as separate pieces of data, but which form and modify free-floating cognitive structures through which knowledge is constructed and understood (La Violette, 1982). According to the neurophysiologist Karl Pribram, this is a holographic model that represents the functioning of the brain (Grof & Bennett, 1993). This model re-conceptualizes the idea of mechanical processes with the theory of holonomy. Holonomy is based on a concept from systems theory that wholes are contained within wholes and that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Learning is more accurately understood as patterns of mutually interrelated processes that unfold, not by fixed stages of development, but as waves and streams of development that also enfold in oscillations - a spiraling process Wilber (2000) referred to as Spiral Dynamics. As a non-linear process, it is an important concept for re-conceptualizing a movement of thoughts within the context of the individual's own learning process. Congruently, the learning path itself is naturally non-linear (Doll, 1999).

Thus models based on sequential, linear development according to time, may create discontinuities. By using conceptual models that situate the same elements and forms along a spiral, thematic clusters are possible. Within a spiral, development is seamless but relationally nested. Spirals are based on forms that are not bound to the containment of structural borders but their elements exist together as constellations of occurrence. Wilber (1999) uses the concept of the nested hierarchy of a spiral for a re-conceptualization of structures typically represented by lines or lattices. Spiral dynamics recognizes that all formational elements are important and contribute to the whole design without eliminating what came before. The spiral may grow in different forms and shapes but every previous element is essential to the whole. While no one part is more important

than the others, their roles and conditions may be differentiated. Conceptually, it is a completely different structure of thinking and perceiving than the existing duality model of oppositional intersecting linearities. Just as a rhizome is not a structure but a confluence of various convergences (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), the spiral as a model of visual thinking and the artistic process is one based on unfolding, oscillating, and emergent processes. Rhizomatics yields a different perspective than that which the mechanistic model of stimulus and response (S-R) functions. The S-R model is still used for conceptualizing visual perception and how individuals process mental representations. The rhizome as a metaphor for visual semiosis allows for the blurring of boundaries between interior and exterior, between physical and psychical, and other figurative conventions used to understand consciousness. Rhizomatics allows for the development of a personal codex whose conceptual framework may not fit the conceptual ordering process that mechanism and positivism suggest.

If visual culture remains for the most part in the realm of scholars, curators, and art historians as some critics maintain (Elkins, 2002), it will take its place also as a historical relic as a nested hierarchy within its own spiral. New discourse from critical pedagogy, thus, is a necessary tool in the effort to bridge theory and practice by engaging in active inquiry and investigation between contexts of origination and relationships that can be drawn to the discourses of speaking and silenced subjects. But visual culture's transformative power is the meta-cognitive aspects of semiosis where meaning is not solely given or responded to through socio-cultural contexts and derivations, but constructed within the sign and coding systems of the individual's engagements within these larger constellations. In this study, *visual semiosis* is defined as an interpretive system for examining the triadic relationship between sign systems, codes of representation, and meaning-making processes within the socio-cultural framework in which they operate.

This qualitative research is intended to contribute to the dialogue and the debate about the importance of studying individuals' personal coding systems - the ways in which individuals make meaning from what is seen, experienced, and related to meaningfully

develop frameworks for the analysis of culture and contemporary art. *Dialogic inquiry*, as I use it, is based on work by Wells (1999) and Bohm (1994) where individual and group discursive modes are used critically as part of toolkits for meaning-making. Bohm (1994) suggests that paying attention to how thoughts operate is a process – a *movement of becoming* (p. 50). *Reflective practice* is a method used in visual pedagogy to examine the material processes of thought by cultivating a dialogue with oneself that allows for *experiential intelligence* to make intuitive connections (Perkins, 1994).

As will become apparent throughout this study, the pedagogical field is in a process of re-conceptualizing learning, knowledge and cognition that underpin educational study, impacting visual culture as a field. Thus, my emphasis remains on making a necessary contribution to the transformation of pedagogical assumptions and structures – individually and systemically. It is to those (emerging) educators and students who guide and nurture the future of the field through their role and example today that this work is dedicated.

An essential competency of meta-level cognition is to practice *thinking about thinking* as a precondition for transformational change. Observing one's own process of thinking without being detached from participation, and connecting it to learning processes, is not just reflexivity, it is a meta-cognition (Jackson, 2004). In this study, I examine how student voice is revealed in semiotic relationship to dialogic and reflective practice and how the process of thinking through the intersection of all pedagogical and experiential factors allows voice to become its own *moment* of becoming.

THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE IN CZECH ART EDUCATION

As the sphere of art education in Czech Republic is an important context for my research, I begin by including an overview of some of the factors influencing pre-service art education. While Duncum (2003) differentiates between three theoretical approaches to visual culture arts education (VCAE), it is not his cultural studies or material culture approaches that are found in the Czech Republic, but his third *eclectic* approach is the most common, referring to a method that cannot be adequately categorized. The lack of consistent quality arts education experiences for primary and secondary students is a trend which appears not only in the United States (NAEA, 2003), but elsewhere in the world, and it is clearly affecting public schools of Czech Republic. In Czech Republic, 40% of current art teachers in schools are uncertified (Slavík, 2006). To address the lack of standardization and consistency resulting from this situation, the recent Educational Framework for Art and Culture adopted in 2006 by the Czech Ministry of Education outlined and piloted curriculum integration of new competencies in music and visual arts. These competencies include the thematic areas of visual and contemporary culture for primary and secondary schools.

Public school primary and secondary school teachers work within an educational system that currently has no standardized, professional development system in place for them and are typically expected to engage in their own professional development activities at their own expense without salary benefits or other incentives to do so. The exception is training offered to them by teaching faculties in universities and community-based arts and cultural institutions [Figure 3].

Leadership for change, for the most part, happens through the examples and practice of the country's top arts educators instead. (Slavík, 2006). While Slavík refers to the uncertified art teachers as *unqualified* professionals, it is not clear if an academic framework for arts educators is



Figure 3: Teacher Training Workshop.
Tipton (2007)

the deciding factor for excellence. My own observations of the high quality of art that is produced in Czech Republic through in-school and out-of-school art programs, appears to be related to the high number of practicing artists that are in teaching faculties and schools [Figure 4].

Is it possible that what may excel creatively, can flounder systematically? Along these lines as Fringe (1997) asks:

...what relations may we establish between art, knowledge, intuition, and imagination in our programs? Because the artist transcends conventions in order to continuously create, his/her intentionality, desire, realization, and reflection include intuition, thoughts, memories, emotions, perceptions, and feelings-in other words exactly the kind of holistic existence that should be the very basis of education. (p. 108)



Figure 4: Teacher Training Workshop. Tipton (2007)

At the same time, Slavík (2006) cites that art education in the Czech lands has one of the longest uninterrupted traditions in Europe which dates from 1774, and its teacher education program is one of Europe's most rigorous (Anderson & Fulková, 2005).

Its exceptional nature consists of the fact that from the very beginning it is promoted as a relatively independent *didactic discipline*, based on the explorative understanding of the perceptual activity of the pupil – art activity – in the context of tuition. (Slavík, 2006, p. 1) [Figure 5]

Historically, Czech teachers played an important role in the worldwide development of art theory and teaching with the first, planned study of children's drawings in 1870. In the twentieth century, the Czech general education system was a forerunner to the trend elsewhere in the world to shift from technical virtuosity in drawing and Renaissance copy work to the personal, thematic and expressive elements of children's art.



Figure 5: Zorby, Basic School, Smid (2006)

After World War I, constructivism played an early role in education, as did Löwenfeld's research into creativity, supporting the ongoing development of a psychological theory of creativity. By 1946, a broader name of 'art education' was officially established and in 1960. Following this, the publication *Aesthetic Education*,

introduced a synaesthetic association between art and music, which still remains a topic for pedagogical research and teaching today.

In 1963, after the establishment of the International Society of Education through Art (InSEA), within the UNESCO framework, there was a subsequent InSEA world congress in Prague in 1966, calling for the arts educators to turn away from 'craft' to the creative and individualizing capacity of art education through its expressive qualities [Figure 6].

InSEA supported the development of the idea that by developing the personality and contributing to learning at all levels, creativity is a basic requirement and art is its highest expression. Thus, art contributes to the emotional, intellectual and social development of human beings in society (InSEA Constitution, cited by Slavík, 2006, p. 2).



Figure 6: Museum of Carriages. Smid (2006)

InSEA's constitution contributed to establishing the foundation for autonomy and expressiveness in art in Czech education, which led to its ongoing popularity. Importantly, this approach emphasized respect for the individual perception of the world, their individuality and style of expression. With the 1980s came the influence of postmodernism reflecting a plurality of perspectives, approaches, and genres, (including awareness of DBAE), that continues today. As part of the pedagogical action research of the Prague Group of School Ethnography led by Milos Kucera and Stanislav Štech, Štech was the first to introduce constructivism into Czech pedagogical theory and teaching practice. Departments of Art Education within universities in Czech Republic such as those in the Pedagogical Faculties of Prague, Brno, Plzeň, Olomouc, Hradec Králové, and Ústí nad Labem provided leadership in the development of qualified art teachers, and for ongoing pedagogical research and theory in art education. Of note within this period in Prague, Slavík (1997, 2001) introduced a new stream within art education called "art philetics" which combines creative art education with art therapy. Slavík based his ideas on extending a philosophy of knowledge of art to psychological and social competencies

through group art activities.



Figure 7: Zarby Basic School. Smid (2006)

He has been instrumental in developing various national research efforts and books on topics such as the social cognition of emotion, and the recent longitudinal ARTAMA project through the Czech Ministry of Education researching the relationship between art activities and personality development in primary school children (Slavík, 2006) [Figure 7].

Fulková's contribution to the development of programs for schools through cultural institutions in the 90s helped establish educational frameworks for arts and cultural education in Czech basic schools [Figure 8].

Like Slavík, Fulková brought a strong research focus to art education to address and strengthen pedagogical concerns in schools. Working collaboratively across disciplines and institutions, Fulková also produced innovative curricula, books, research, and practica for teachers. This led to her development of innovative books



Figure 8: Fulkova in Galerie Rudolfinum during the Shomei Tomatsu Teacher Training Program. Tipton (2006)

on Art Education for grades 6 - 9 of the Basic Schools, designed to link non-sequential learning concepts in art curricula to lay community experiences with art (1999, 2000) In 2001, Fulková co-authored a new national Curriculum for Art Education for ages 6 – 15. Complementing these efforts are the contributions by professional artists for pedagogical training in university teaching faculties [Figure 9].

The presence of scholars and artists within the Pedagogical Faculties in Art Education Departments, has contributed to Czech Republic having one of the most active art education communities across Europe (A. Plank, personal communication, November 6, 2006). Vančát & Svoboda (2006) documented the



Figure 9: Teacher Training Workshop. Tipton (2007)

additional contribution of contemporary Czech artists have made to contemporary art theory, adding the concept of *transgenesis*, which moves beyond the transgression of 'non-living' abstractions, pointing to the emerging artistic and theoretical confluence between art, biology, and philosophy (p. 16) as one possible intervisuality [Figure 10].



Figure 10: Tomaš Vaněk discussing his project *Living Score* with basic school art teachers, Tipton (2006)

As an example of Czech Republic's historical contribution to the development of art education as a whole, Slavík cites the ancient concept of, "*areté* – knowledge that cannot be taught – which is defined as 'Good', honour or feeling for the current situation, and *techné* – skill or knowledge that can be taught" (p. 2) which formed the dialectical correlation in the schools. In the '90s there grew a critique against normative schema taught in schools in favor of individual innovation. This tension was mitigated by the idea of testing oneself and the knowledge they thought they had, in dialogue with oneself and others (Gadamer, 1994, cited by Fulková, 2004) [Figure 11].

Gadamer contributed the idea that every perception is built upon a prior pre-understanding, which Slavík (2006) refers to as containing a hidden stereotype (p. 4).

Art education and other artistic fields are therefore, in present schools, not only a means of *enculturation and socialisation* at the level of *techné*. To a lesser extent, at the level of *areté*, they are a unique *discursive forum*, which is able to react naturally and sensibly to current social-cultural events and is able to bring to schools, in the name of recognition, *interpretation, reflection and dialogue* (Hajdušková, 2004). It must be added that in the general practice of our education system cognitive reflexes, real dialogue (Hajdušková, 2003) and hermeneutically conceived interpretation are just as rare as the proverbial saffron. (p. 5)



Figure 11: 'Meet the Faces' project at International School of Prague (ISP). Melanen and Raatikainen (2006)

The hidden stereotype in this instance is that the operating structures behind the institutionalized schooling relations are seemingly intractable, causing the system

components to invert against themselves. Thus, there is a certain implosion within the existing public educational structure where the lack of infrastructure support and funding for the humanities and education in general, lags far behind that which is awarded to the areas of science, math and technology – not only in Czech Republic but across the European Union, and perhaps globally.

Czech Educational Framework for Arts and Culture

After an initial pilot in 16 primary and 16 secondary schools in Czech Republic between 2004-2006, the Czech Educational Framework for Arts and Culture (2006) was adopted to develop and implement new, broad-based student learning outcomes (SLO's) for art reception, production, and interpretation of visual symbol systems [Figure 12].

The Educational Framework defines culture as,

“...a process and result of mental activities which enables understanding of the continuity of changes of historical experience in which an individual becomes a part of the society and one's existence is projected into the social one. We consider as well, how culture is an inseparable part of everyday life (the culture of ethics, culture of clothing, traveling, work, etc.). (2004, paragraph 1)



Figure 12: 'Meet the Faces' project at National Gallery, Melanen and Raatikainen (2006)

Although general arts education includes literature in Czech Republic for secondary students, the Framework outcomes are clustered in three main areas for the visual arts and music: (1) the artistic process and its development; (2) the role of the individual in the artistic process; and (3) the role of communication in the artistic process [Figure 13]

One of its stated objectives is encouraging an interest in arts, including contemporary art (Pastorová, 2006).



Figure 13: 'Meet the Faces' project at 137. Melanen and Raatikainen (2006)

During its pilot phase, an expansion of community education programs in museums and galleries took place.

Like the qualifications for art teachers, the document has inconsistent standards for the evaluation of its outcomes. As an example, the student outcome, “explain which prerequisites are necessary for the reception of a work of art and mainly for the understanding of contemporary artworks. (Arts and Culture; Educational Framework, 2006, English version, p. 6) places reception into a didactic context between the student and the teacher which is mediated by a work of art. We see that contemporary art is included but not how. By not specifying what is expected to be produced for ‘prerequisites’, the art educator is given space to develop their own interpretations. This has particular advantages within the Czech context of implementation. It preserves the autonomy and freedom of arts educators to work within an open approach to learning. As I argue elsewhere, this is an important context to develop pedagogically. However, it is offset by the lack of infrastructure support to educators to help extend their own frameworks of interpretation, thus possibly narrowing the student learning experience instead of extending it. Another possible narrowing can be seen in a didactic pedagogy with formalist elements as in this example from the Arts and Culture Educational Framework (2004) text:

From the process of artistic learning about the world arises also development of specific sensibility, creativity and perception of an individual towards a piece of art and through it also towards oneself and the surrounding world. Part of this process is represented by searching for and finding the relations between various kinds of art based on their mutual themes. In addition to this, the process enables the individual the capacity to empathise cultural needs of other people and the values created by them and to approach them with the recognition of one’s own participation in them. The creative activities aim at development of the capacity of non-verbal expression through tone and sound, line, point, form, color, gesture, facial expression, etc. (paragraph 2)

It is not clear however, how the process of artistic learning is actually taking place. In her report to the Czech InSEA conference in Prague in 2006, Pastorová cited five major problems of the framework’s implementation: (1) *art teachers focus on the process of training and teaching basic art skills instead of focusing on the way of thinking and on*

creative processes; (2) teachers feel isolated and lack confidence in themselves; (3) teachers lack confidence in the value and worth of the arts as a subject and tend to rely on cross-curricular themes with other subjects; (4) there is a reticence to make prepared lessons available for dissemination; and (5) there is a perceived lack of reliable resources including links to faculties, professional associations, and information networks to help them.

Thus, when the institutional context is already un-standardized, open curriculum frameworks can be problematic. On the other hand, its citation of contemporary art and communication processes provides the context as well as the need for a pedagogical model demonstrating their use and outcomes. There is a current mismatch between a field of study that is growing and diversifying on the one hand, and the institutional context that is narrowing and reducing the instructional time allotted to art education, on the other. Given that the overall amount of instructional hours for art education in K-12 instruction constitutes a very small percentage of the overall time devoted to other subjects in school, (NEA, 1997; NAEA, 2002), arts educators must decide what is possible according to their own situation and context. In a socio-cultural milieu of information explosion, Wilson (2003) reminds arts educators that it is impossible to teach everything of importance. In this sense, The Czech Framework for Arts and Culture provides the possibility for teacher autonomy for assessment instead of institutional pre-sets. At the same time, the challenge of subject marginalization at all levels in arts education, gives even more impetus to shift from teaching *content* per se, to the creative use and development of diverse investigative and meaning-making tools with students and pre-service teachers of art.

In spite of its challenges, the basic school and tertiary levels still evidences high quality art education (Anderson & Fulková, 2005). [Figure 14]



Figure 14: Art Exhibit from
Základní Umělecká Škola, Prague.
Tipton (2008)

Both programs put a premium on development of self through artistic and reflective activity. The art teacher preparation program also placed an emphasis on critical thinking of the sort that makes future teachers aware of themselves, not only as artists, but also as teachers of students who must engage in an integrated world in and through art. (p. 106)

While most of the humanities (and artists) suffered professional and financial isolation for fifty years prior to Czech Republic's entry into the European Union in 2003, the resilience and creativity shown in the face of dire circumstances exemplify its context instead of diminish it when compared to the well-developed infrastructure and institutional support for higher education in the U.S. or within the European Union. As Anderson & Fulková (2005) conclude,

Getting to know others and others' ways of being and doing offers an invaluable perspective on our own ways of being and doing, giving us insights as to what we may be doing well and what others can teach us for improvement not only in art education but in art for life (p. 106) [Figure 15].



Figure 15: Zarby Basic School, Prague. Smid
(2006)

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH MODEL

A qualitative study with a constructivist perspective was chosen as a theoretical model because of its premise that features of the social environment are constructed by individual interpretations that are both situational and transitory. While most qualitative models are drawn from the social sciences (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Gall, Borg and Gall, 1996; Bernard, 2000; Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2004; etc., the arts education community has adapted its own variance of them (La Pierre and Zimmerman, 1997; Sullivan, 2005; Irwin & de Cosson, 2004; Bresler, 2006). Relevant to the critical aspect of qualitative arts education research is Wilson's (1997) adapted use of Kreitler and Kreitler's (1976) "Dimensions of Meaning" where the researcher conducts a self-examination, similar to what was espoused by Shor and Freire (1987) and Galbraith (1993). What has not been fully addressed in qualitative methodology is the use of dialogic processes (Bresler, 2006). This study develops a space for the inclusion of dialogic inquiry as a method of qualitative research.

A qualitative approach takes into account the context of the settings in which a typical arts educator works. Qualitative researchers study natural settings, to interpret and make meaning from observations of events, actions and processes. This includes application from the theoretical training setting to classroom instruction, and from the classroom into the community where visual resources and visual events are created and preserved. I chose to connect classroom activities with community-based resources through museum and gallery settings as a source of encountering varieties of contemporary art, artistic practices, and artists.

An assumption of the qualitative model is that knowledge manifests inductively as well as deductively, building upon abstractions, concepts and theories from variables of the study rather than those extracted from tests related to an existing theory. Central to the qualitative study is the role of the researcher, not only as an observer but also as a participant. As data is mediated through a human instrument as distinct from an inventory, questionnaire, or computer analysis, emphasis is placed on the perspective of

the researcher. The researcher's professional expertise and experience is central to affirming the validity of the extracted concepts as a movement across their roles as a participant, artist, teacher, and researcher (Irwin, et. al, 2006). My own visual ethnography, observations and reflective writing of events contributes to those of the participants, thus supporting the qualitative framework for this study for participant action research (PAR). With PAR, research decision-making is shared with participants and assumes that reality is not an objective truth or set of facts to be discovered but includes the ways in which the people involved with facts perceive them. Traditionally excluded from knowledge building, the 'subjects' of the study participate from their own 'standpoint' (Harding, 1993). Sandra Harding's 'Standpoint Theory,' contextualizes knowledge to the location of any individual point of view.

In order to explore the interaction of the factors characteristic of teaching visual cultural and contemporary art in natural settings, action research field studies, interpretive case studies, critical discourse analysis, dialogic inquiry as *a/r/tography*, and neo-narratives were selected. *A/r/tography* is a qualitative, practice-based research methodology (Sullivan, 2004) that recognizes rhizomatic shifts within the inquiry process between the researcher as teacher and artist within their own practice (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004). *A/r/tography* proposes that theory is an embodied living inquiry, which is always in a state of becoming (Irwin et.al., 2006). As such, the researcher's analysis from their own experience is considered a valid part of grounding and constructing the research findings. Case studies are situated in a particular time and place and are flexibly bounded by the events within them. They are characterized as a type of empirical inquiry which is process-based, emergent and fluid. The interpretive case study model requires sensitivity to context, attention to detail, good observation skills, tolerance for ambiguity, and openness. The case study method allowed me to incorporate a systems perspective as part of the theoretical framework to examine the semiotic constructivism of the experiences through which the study is designed around. Systems thinking is open-ended and interrelational. Its foundational belief is holistic. System thinking is non-linear, inter-relational, and divergent, utilizing a *rhizome as metaphor* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987;

Wilson, 2003). This perspective allows for creativity or novelty to appear as analytic convergences and not solely linearities.

In this study, *visual semiosis* is defined as an interpretive system for examining the triadic relationship between sign systems, codes of representation, and meaning-making processes within the socio-cultural framework in which they operate. *Dialogic inquiry* is taken from work by Wells (1999) and Bohm (1994) where individual and group discursive modes are used critically for meaning-making. Bohm suggests that paying attention to how thoughts operate is a process – a *movement of becoming*. *Reflective practice* examines the material processes of thought and cultivates a dialogue with oneself that allows for *experiential intelligence* to make intuitive connections (Perkins, 1994).

Research within and through these elements offers the possibility for both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Narrative methods, (reflective writing and field notes) and interpretive case studies, allow for the integration of meta-reflection, dialogic inquiry, and art practice as tools of problematizing art as sites of research (Sullivan, 2004). Using the combination of dialogic inquiry and reflective writing with participants through an awareness of a 'proprioception of thinking' were tools for revealing the immediate relationship between thinking, perception, and experience.

Problem Statement and Research Questions

Understanding personal coding systems and interpretive, meaning-making processes is an essential aspect of constructing knowledge from encounters of visual culture and contemporary art. What is missing from practice in visual culture arts education and pre-service pedagogy in particular, is engaging students and teachers in a process of awareness of how they encode and decode visual experience in contemporary society - a visual semiosis.

How do pre-service students become aware of semiotic interrelationships within their

own meaning-making strategies and processes? The context behind this question assumes that teaching visual culture through a pedagogy of visual semiosis requires strategies for the meta-cognition of a proprioception of thinking (Bohm, 1994). A *proprioception of thinking* is a meta-level process attending to the structure of thought by cultivating awareness of how thoughts are constructed, used, and flow. As pre-service educators tend to utilize the methods they are trained with in the classroom (Milbrandt & Klein, 2008), addressing this unmet need through pre-service pedagogy is a critical intervention towards the teaching of visual culture curriculum in schools at all levels. As a result of this unmet need, the following questions were researched:

- What impact does teaching visual culture through a pedagogy of visual semiosis to pre-service art education students have on the sensory-perception and cognition of visual encounters?
- What do dialogic inquiry and reflective practices reveal about how pre-service students of art/education encode and decode critical encounters with visual culture?
- How do beliefs and expectations about art influence how encounters with visual culture are interpreted?

Pedagogical and Research Design

Seminars with under/graduate pre-service students were designed around teaching visual culture through a variety of visual encounters with contemporary art that involved experiencing exhibitions in gallery settings; analyzing images from exhibitions, mass media and advertising; critical readings; group dialogue, reflective writing; art activities and student presentations.

Drawing upon the work of multi-literacies and dialogic inquiry (Cope & Kalazantis, 2000; van Leeuwen and Jewitt, 2001; Matthews, 2005), the pedagogical methods of situated practice, constructivism, critical inquiry, and transformed practice were utilized as tools through an interpretive framework of visual semiosis. Narrative methods, (reflective writing and field notes) and interpretive case studies, allow for the integration

of meta-reflection, dialogic inquiry, and art practice as tools of problematizing art as sites of research (Sullivan, 2004).

Pedagogical Methods

Drawing upon the work of multi-literacies and dialogic inquiry (Cope & Kalazantis, 2000; Kress 2000; van Leeuwen and Jewitt, 2001; Matthews, 2005), the following pedagogical methods were utilized as the means to teach visual culture through an interpretive framework of visual semiosis:

Situated practice – developing interests, motivation, innovation, and respect for a wide range of visibility (individuality) by making connections to contemporary visual culture through the community of learning and practice by reflection, engagement, and dialogue.

Constructivism – facilitating individualized knowledge construction emerging from self-directed learning processes, intentions, and modalities in collaboration with facilitating guides, peers, diverse communities of practice, and community resources;

Critical Inquiry – engaging with visual culture by investigating the implications of various critical theories and scholarship; examining discourses, discursive layers, sets of relationships and constellations of formation in systems that embody and disperse power, and de/constructing how coding systems operate in which representations and identities form and function in the socio-cultural and personal realm

Transformed Practice – a process of framing questions and developing insight by using the tools of dialogic inquiry and reflective practice to extend investigations into sources, verbal and non-verbal interpretations, and contexts of discourses, their sign-systems and how they are used in socio-cultural practices. Process-based considerations are embedded throughout strategies, theoretical implications, reflective practices, and artmaking. The inclusion of art practice as a method of teaching visual culture

emphasizes the practical application of visuality. By exploring, interacting and experimenting with these elements using a variety of modalities, materials, tools, and processes, and relate them to visual culture discourses, students engage in a process of deciphering and creating intervisualities.

Participants and Setting

Between 2005 and 2008, the main research group consisted of 15 pre-service students at the Pedagogical Faculty in the Department of Art Education over the course of four, semester-long seminars. In addition to this main research group, one group of 13 undergraduate students from the Visual Culture program at University of Western Bohemia in Plzeň participated in two three-hour sessions. Seven groups (108) of high school students from Gymnasium Na Zatlance Prague participated in two 60-90-minute gallery experiences at the contemporary art venue, Galerie Rudolfinum for the *Uncertain States of America* exhibition (2007-2008). Four of these seven groups participated in two 60-90-minute follow-up experiences in their high school.

Methods of Data Collection

My data includes researcher field notes from dialogic sessions, as well as questionnaires, reflective writing, worksheets, and self-assessments by student participants. Various kinds of in situ reflective writings and worksheets were collected in community settings with under/graduate students in Prague and Plzeň and at Galerie Rudolfinum. Visual anthropology was collected from student artwork/media, art exhibitions, digital photographic documentation, and mass media images.

Data Analysis

Written texts (100) by pre-service students were open-coded according to their relevance to research questions with the assistance of the qualitative, data analysis software, *ATLAS.ti*, [Scientific Software] generated code frequency and symbol maps. Using a

grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2004; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1967), 116 codes from five, pre-service data units were linked together in code networks from which supercodes and thematic categories were developed. [Two additional data units with high school student texts were recorded anecdotally but not computerized]. Criteria for selecting and relating text passages via codes to code networks included frequency of occurrence and types of discourses. Discourses were identified and analyzed according to the method of critical discourse analysis referred to as critical social semiotics, which relates semiotic theory to key social and critical theories of visual culture educationally through multimodal forms of communication (Caldas-Coulthard & Van Leeuwen, 2003; Gee, 2003).

Across four pre-service units (HU2-5) 11 codes were consistently and frequently represented – (25%+) *beauty, change, different, influence, information, open, structure, understand (it), sense, should, and sign*. Supercodes are query formed by other codes. Supercode networks from discourse analysis of corresponding quotations were: *identity politics; beauty's necessary presence?; revealing power relations, structure of influence; between these two wantings; something that escapes; making connections; reordering the space; sculptural presence; and network of relationships*.

Six major types of discourses were identified from analyzing codes and supercodes: *cultural self-location, power relationships, conjectural, palimpsestic, transposition, and professionalizing narrative*. The circulation that alternated between coding, theory, meta-reflection, dialogic processes, and student and researcher voices, formed neo-narratives from their intersections. Neo-narratives are constituted by analyzing what actually happened according to the people involved (Stewart, 1997). “The Neonarrative model features the interactive development and analysis of narratives leading toward Neonarratives, or new stories, and represents a naturalistic approach strongly featuring the personal accounts from the respondents” (p. 224).

Delimitations

The research study is focused and intended for the field of arts education, specifically curriculum and pedagogy for teaching visual culture at the tertiary level with pre-service students, with extensions to teaching visual culture at the secondary level. The study also extends to and includes gallery cultural education settings with high school students and older participants. The gallery settings are part of local community arts resources. As active arts and cultural organizations offering public arts education programs per se do not really exist in Czech Republic as they do in other countries, they were not a part of the study. Thus, the background and context of the study is not generalized to programs of visual studies or culture studies where learning about, and in and through the arts is not a primary goal, although there will be correspondence in the interpretive framework and methods of pedagogy.

While the study took place at Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic, it is not limited to the Czech Republic context. Its research findings assume applicability internationally, especially to pre-service programs of a similar nature in other countries. Charles University, founded in 1358, is the oldest institution of higher learning in Europe. Standards for scholarship and academic work at Charles University are rigorous and institutionally diverse. Its teacher certification in Art Education in general requires graduates to be fifth-year, masters-level students, thus exceeding the minimal qualifications for entry-level teachers in most other countries around the world.

The impetus for educational change encompasses more than visual arts education, but I do not specifically analyze school reform issues because their contexts are totally different in localities as well as other countries and cannot be solely compared or compartmentalized. But I do make the case that much can be learned from the Czech system of arts education, even though many of their own professional voices have not made their way into English.

I introduce but do not elaborate the histories of arts education practice in either the USA or Czech Republic, which have been sufficiently analyzed by others cited in this study. Instead, I focus on the epistemology and philosophy of knowledge production (and construction) as it exists as a formative code and structure behind the theoretical models across many international school platforms, and influence academic and educational practice nearly globally today. It is from this context that I draw the impetus for change.

Curricular change is different from school reform and both are dependent upon the institutionalizing and legislative structures and rules of their own contexts. I do not situate my critique only within the contexts of the two major systems of education that my experience is bridging, but generalize it towards international educators. Situated experience will be different in Czech Republic from any other country or city for that matter, but hopefully the research will find its usefulness to those in other parts of the world.

CHAPTER 1: VISUALIZING VISUAL CULTURE

**Every image embodies a way of seeing.
- John Berger, (1972, p. 10)**

Con/Texting Background

While the norm of everyday experience in large urban environments is a semiotic field of competing visualities, educational pedagogy peripherally makes use of it. In a media-rich environment, information overload and a saturated visual field is the norm of everyday experience (Gee, 2003). Images from computer software, videogames, advertising, school textbooks, children's books, magazines, movies, television, zines, the Internet and the socio-cultural environment form the informational realm that learners consume today (Darley, 2000). Gardner (1982) adds that, "...the forms favored by the culture come to exert increasingly influence over, and eventually to dominate, the characteristic bits that the children have been producing with relatively little instruction from the culture" (p. 156).

As the use of mass media imagery is socially and culturally pervasive and embedded with persuasion, sensual pleasure, spectacle and surface play, finding the connections that mediate forms of knowing, meaning-making and interpretation, are necessary in order to understand how visual experiences are encoded, decoded, and *rewritten* individually and collectively. Visual culture can be found in all societies today, with visual information generated and experienced from a variety of sources and interactions. Even in the remotest parts of the globe, the impact of a mass marketed commodity culture can be found alongside traditional, cultural forms of life. "The issues that daily surround us cause us to re-examine and critically reflect upon what and how we are teaching and what our students, be they elementary or college students, are learning" (Gaudelius & Speirs, 2002, p. 1).

Visual culture is influenced by the interdisciplinary field of cultural studies, which emerged in the early 1960's, (Duncum, 2003, p. 19). Framing it in its current context,

Dikovitskaya (2005) writes, “An interdisciplinary field, visual studies came together in the late 1980s after the disciplines of art history, anthropology, film studies, linguistics, and comparative literature encountered poststructuralist theory and cultural studies.” (p. 1). Hybrids between these intersections continue to shape-shift and grow into an ever evolving realm of ideas, theories and practices.

An early use of *visual culture* appeared outside of arts education by Gattegno in 1969 (Dikovitskaya, 2005, p. 6) promoting education through television. At the same time his work appeared there was a growing cross-disciplinary idea that patterns of cognitive perception are influenced culturally and change accordingly to their contexts. Baxandall (1972) introduced this concept as the ‘period eye’ identifying habits of vision and modes of cognitive perception as they are related to pictorial styles (Dikovitskaya, 2005, p. 9).

Tavin (2005) rightly credits Laura Chapman as the first person to use the term *visual culture* in arts education literature in 1982 (p. 14). Chapman’s early influence on arts education curriculum (1978) and her series, *Discover Art*, (1992), put her ideas into primary and secondary school practice. Her recent work with *personal experience as inquiry* (2005), repositions Dewey’s (1934) emphasis on experience as art back into situated practice in arts education and connects with the experiential learning theories of the ‘80’s. (Kolb, 1984; McCarthy, 1987). She herself cautions the use of the word visual culture and recommends the concept of mass arts to address the ubiquitous presence of

...mass-circulated images, mass-produced artifacts, events, and environments that flow from a consumer-based economy and quest for profit. These conditions allow for certain efficiencies in delivering cultural fare to the maximum number of people at multiple points of reception. They also favor the creation of forms of artistry that ordinarily require little formal training for their appreciation and use. I will call images, artifacts, environments, and events created, produced, and distributed under these conditions the *mass arts*. (Chapman, 2003, p. 2)

However one wants to try and define or refute it, as a term, *visual culture*, also appears in other contexts such as in medical studies, imaging technologies in biochemistry, public relations research, ICT, fifteenth century literature, and pre-Columbian artifacts, to name a few. *Visual culture* is not longer solely a term related to the critique of contemporary socio-cultural constructs and narratives in relationship to visual art, material culture, or

culture studies or the body of their images. While Duncum (2003) differentiates between the functionality of material culture studies and the critical, contestual nature of cultural studies, Tavin cautions the distinction between visual and popular culture (2005). In both cases, visual culture today continues to cross disciplinary borders as much as it breaks them. Both of these writers point towards the consideration of visual culture's pluralities. According to Frange (1998),

It is impossible to produce art without interconnections between functions, forms, images, concepts. Images, in postmodernity, are beyond functions, beyond forms, beyond concepts. In order to establish relationships, one needs to desire not that which is a representative process, but rather a 'presentation' process to be constructed within arts curricula. Art, philosophy, and science must be interconnected and they must relate to the cultural manifestations of memories and traditions, metanarratives and questionings, which become the exercise of an imaginative and philosophical daily routine. We live with high technological advances on the one hand and with the production of artists and craftsman on the other hand, a production deriving from the most diverse materials and cultures. The multimedia can offer a wide range of referents, which at first glance appear to be impossible. It can also facilitate the carrying out of inquiries, mainly of the latest publications, through data banks and updated images. (p. 119)

As such, I do not directly interrogate theories that argue for or against popular culture as a component of visual culture, nor do I differentiate between cultural genres, such as a visual *digital* culture (Darley, 2000) as these theories tend to dichotomize coding systems conditioned by global consumer culture as if they operate differently than other forms of visuality. Nor do I assume that contesting them is sufficient as a pedagogical goal. Many visual culture scholars and educators producing VCAE curriculum supposedly lead students towards social reconstructivism or emancipatory positions. Whereas these theories came out of the life practice of people who actually embodied them, it isn't clear how using critique in this way grounds a new social order or how students are actually adopting roles for themselves to produce the effort and actions necessary to create change and seems to appear as a new ideology. While the field's diversity cannot be contained in any singular methodology, perspective, interpretive framework, or content, all of these different positions are simply tools and mental models within various dimensions of complexity, each one capable of engaging a process of inquiry. On the other hand, the work of many international contemporary artists and art collectives is deliberately subversive to socio-political regimes and intentionally strategize for activism,

consciousness-raising, or advocacy for social, political and institutional change. Thus, within the multifarious discourses of contemporary art can be found necessary connections and pathways into all of these different areas of inquiry, if desired. Instead of trying to make a 'one size fits all approach', I focus on the relationship between discourses from contemporary art and artists and the individual as a rhizome which connects seemingly disparate ideas together, instead of a pedagogy that uses a didactic response to theories to connect the individual to images.

For this study, I use Tavin's (2003) description of visual culture as new thinking in the field of arts education, redefining the relationship between images, their social constructions, and the manner in which they are perceived and interpreted, as well as the body of images and materials from which their study is taken. As Duncum (2004) indicates, visual culture isn't just *visual*; it is an *interaction* between modes of communication that are multimodal and multiliterate.

Today, the field of arts education continues to draw upon interdisciplinary scholarship for its own theories and approaches to visual culture. In the past ten years, a variety of resources have emerged focusing on various theoretical positions in visual/culture studies and socio-cultural critiques that have by now become mainstreamed positions within visual culture art education, such as agency, resignification, subjectivities, gender performativity, the gaze, practices of looking, positionality, and critical theory/pedagogy, to name a few. (Mirzoeff, 1999, 2002; Heywood & Sandywell 1999; Burgin, 1996; Jones, 2003, etc.).

As Hernández points out (2000) "the main focus of visual culture is the study of human visibility (cultural practices of the gaze and vision experiences), in all its extension, and without any separation between scientific, artistic or daily manifestations." Mirzoeff (1999) speaks of visibility as the uniting factor between the genealogy of the visual and the interpretation of culture. Although a case can be made that visual culture is a part of any historicity of art, Paul Duncum's work framing visual culture (2001b) and his call in 2002 for a Visual Culture Art Education (VCAE), situates it within a growing web of

interdisciplinary intersections influencing a shift in the teaching and learning process in arts education (Duncum, 2003, 2004; Freedman, 2003, Hernandez, 2000; Smith-Shank, 2004, Tavin, 2003; etc.).

Whose Visuality?

Critics of a visual culture art education, focus on a perception that VCAE de/valorizes the content of art history by the inclusion of visual artifacts from popular culture. The idea of art as a social phenomenon has shifted the study of art to one of images, while the subject of aesthetics is no longer fashionable and has become displaced inside of the phenomenon of critique without specifying its interpretive framework. As Darley (2000) explains, there must be taken into account the fact of explicit and contingent prejudices and disposition that influence the way in which popular and mass forms are perceived as *culture* (Darley, p. 5).

Applied to visual arts education pedagogy, reformist and reconstructivist approaches have also lent themselves to the development of study in visual culture (Clark, 1996). Visual culture, however, as James Elkins (2002) points out, with its reliance on visual studies as the domain of critical analysis, has its own particular political and institutional bias. Visual studies, while primarily focused on post-1950 imagery and media from film, photography, advertising, and video, still defines what images and content have relevance (Elkins, 2002, p. 94). Many of these images and content are not fully representative of the diversity of people, places, and events within which an inclusive visual culture of art functions and exists. Within K-12 pedagogy, visual culture lessons for student learning experiences tend to be integrated into existing visual arts education programs and lock-step lessons (Hermann, 2005). To a large degree, VCAE remains peripheral to the practice and study of arts education at the K-12 level, introduced in high school or under/graduate levels of instruction.

Influencing art education curriculum by addressing contemporary pre-service education and practice is gaining more attention (Gailbraith, 1993; La Porte, Speirs, & Young,

2008). In their USA study, where exposure to visual culture was experienced as 'moderate' by sampled teachers, the content of undergraduate coursework was highly correlated to subsequent curricular practice and use. "There was a direct relationship between exposure to content areas and subsequent inclusion in the K-12 curriculum" (p. 364). This gives further impetus to inclusion of a visual culture pedagogy for pre-service students and in-service for teachers.

The persistence of modernism and formalism as a dominant arts education paradigm (Efland, Stuhr & Freedman, 1996), is one factor pushing visual culture to the periphery of the field - another spectator. In the last century, modernism, which applies a scientific, rationalist framework to the delineations of form by identifying immutable and essential, knowledge-based elements, was adopted as a universal language of art (Clark, 1996). As a lens through which expression and perception of art are based, modernism became the standard for school-based arts education programs in Westernized countries. With a foundation within a historicity of art, aesthetic philosophies, and defined styles, art history's influence in art education curriculum and pedagogy, borrows its content from art historians, scholars, aestheticians, and art critics, who have created categories of objects valorized according to accepted criterion within their theoretical systems. Because of art history's relationship to seventeenth century Enlightenment era values connecting the aesthetics of beauty to moral precepts, the result has been a persistent mystification of the creative process, its progenitors, and its artifacts. The description and use of periods of art according to agreed upon classifications of styles, artifacts, and artists remains the context as well as the dominant content behind current practice in primary and secondary arts education, whether it is denoted as DBAE or operates according to other paradigms. When appearing in K-12 art programs, visual culture tends to do so as content explored in projects, themes, or units of study, but not as a set of organizing perspectives, relationships, and processes through which the individual is able to construe their own interpretations. Instead, theoretical interpretations are generally given through critical texts that students are expected to utilize and extend. Perkins (1990) attributes this to the limitation of the skill-based transmission model which in its

replication of existing knowledge and skills, does not teach process-based thinking dispositions.

Visual culture, on the other hand, challenges what is considered 'fine art' as well as art that has been selected for inclusion and viewing in arts institutions such as museums and private collections. Visual culture questions the role, influence and formation of visual information in contemporary society from a variety of perspectives. By examining contemporary visual information and its constructs, what was previously considered *a priori* art history is reconstructed within its relationship to the elements of the social, cultural, political, and historical eras which gave their interpretive and perceptive forms particular lenses and epistemologies. Assumptions and distinctions behind what is considered 'not art' are also challenged by a critical visual culture pedagogy.

The meaning is the essence - The art becomes the process of interpretation. The opinion about an artwork is totally beyond formalism. Therefore it is difficult to put up criteria. (HU5, P27: Del Priore, 2007)

Curricular Dis/contents

In the past ten years, many of the scholars in the art education domain have provided the basic theoretical and scholarly frameworks needed for transliteration with visual culture concepts in arts education (Freedman, 2003; Duncum, 2003/2004/2006; Tavin 2003; Hernández, 2006, etc.). Transitioning to visual cultures in arts education has been taken up throughout the international arts education community, without agreement on what it is and how to teach it. (Dikovitskaya, 2005; Freedman, 2003; and Hernández, personal communication 4 July 2006). This dissonance is nowhere felt so strongly as in the disconnect between theories of visual culture and its implementation instructionally in the field. (Hermann, 2005).

Because of discipline-based art education (DBAE)'s formative influence in the United States (Tavin, 2003), VCAE has yet to free itself from its decidedly (North American) academic influence and implementation. In the 1980's in North America, attribution of Derrida's concept of deconstruction spread like an intertextual virus. Whereas Derrida

(1967/1979) originally writes that the deconstruction of a genealogy (of philosophy) would reveal the *presence* of that which had been omitted, deconstructive criticism as it is found in Continental Philosophy runs the danger of being used towards dismissal by absence. Proponents of DBAE tend to take this stance towards VCAE and vice versa.

But Derrida's *double reading* of text, like Freire's critical examination, is a necessarily slow and careful study allowing articulations of the text's blind spots, as a part of a deconstructive process, is nearly overlooked for its *double writing* of opposition and displacement instead.

Some educators (Carter, 2008) choose to place visual culture as a unit of study within DBAE frameworks, thus avoiding the fundamental restructuring of how visibility appears in curriculum. Alternatively, Harvard University's Project Zero and *Arts PROPEL*, used *production, perception and reflection* as its main components for developing domain knowledge in art education without making explicit reference to scholastic art pursuits such as history, criticism, or aesthetics, which they believed should arise naturally as a part of a student's own artistic productivity (Gardner, 1990, p. 45).

...by using the terms 'perception' and 'reflection,' we wish to underscore the point that artistic understanding need not occur merely through alliance with a different disciplinary content (such as the history or criticism of Western art); rather it ought to arise as part of one's own discriminative and reflective powers and ought then to be connected as smoothly and appropriately as possible to other bodies of knowledge. (p. 45)

Perkins (1990) also cautioned concern that too much emphasis on the kind of disciplinary knowledge that DBAE promotes by emphasizing critical thinking at the expense of creative thinking. Significantly, he situates critical thinking as one component of creative thinking and not the other way around.

In contrast to the National Visual Arts Standards (1994) in the USA emphasizing aspects of domain content that was adopted as benchmarks for performance, however, cultural education policy in Europe into which art education is embedded (Cultuurnetwerk Nederland, 2002), focuses on some of the following competencies: *recognizing and understanding one's own cultural values and assumptions; embracing and understanding*

cultural diversity; encouraging a historical perspective by relating contemporary values to the processes and events that have shaped them; and enabling young people to understand the evolutionary nature of culture and process (Mason, 2002 citing the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education, 1999). Ever since the controversy over Serrano's, *Piss Christ*, in the United States in 1987 there has been institutional censorship of various forms of artistic content. In contrast, cultural education programs in Europe have tended to evolve within the creative potential of their directors and curators who are more sympathetic to exploring uncensored content (Tipton, 2007).

Other models of arts education less influenced by the DBAE approach (i.e. Germany, Netherlands, Czech Republic, Finland, Denmark, etc.), have their own contexts of curricular change, such as the global trend of institutionalizing national curriculums (Great Britain, Australia, and Wales); educational benchmarks and standards (European Union); professionalization of arts teachers with little infrastructure support (Eastern Europe), and a persistent marginalization of the field as a whole. All of these factors are compounded by a perceived irrelevancy of traditional arts education by middle and secondary school students (Hadjušková, HU1, 2006; and Kitzbergová, personal communication, May 18, 2008).

As a hybrid field and paradigm, teaching visual culture/s in arts education is thus constrained by a constellation of factors that include previous conceptions of art education; national educational frameworks; and transnational educational paradigms and forms of schooling. Public education systems in many parts of the world are driven according to assessment or outcome standards that are evaluated according to standardized tests derived from general education frameworks. These norms and expectations of the current industrialized model of education rely on socialization to systems of established knowledge production (Shor & Freire, 1987; Giroux 1983). Knowledge from art, however, remains on the periphery of institutional acceptance and practice (Sullivan, 2005).

Visual culture curriculum thus is often still delivered *for* students instead of being designed with them, and as it appears within educational institutions, conforms to existing structures and their terms. For example, the question, 'What kind of art do we want our students to know about and produce?' (Elkins, 2002), is seldom engaged with the students themselves.

The individual as architect of their own knowing is suspected for the use of intuition, personal experience, and non-conceptual modalities of information and instead must prove their conformance to the tenets of the schooled environment. While the terminology of appropriation, privilege, and authority are commonly used as critical devices resulting from interrogations within critical pedagogy, ironically these aspects are already institutionalized in all systems of schooling and in the contextual realm in which these scholarly interpretations appear. Matthews (2005) says this clearly in relationship to using critical discourse analysis strategies with students in the classroom:

I would now like to chart the discourses opened up for discussion when visuals are interrogated with the questions: what kinds of subjects of knowledge, relations of power, and identities are practiced, strategized, and polemicized? These questions allow us to see why it is so difficult to speak outside the terms of particular discourses and why our debates, language, and concepts often betray us by buying back into the same sorts of knowledge and identities we desire to escape. (p. 214)

A graduate student from Finland responds to this situation by cautioning that, "Challenging the one with knowledge (teacher) takes a lot of courage" (HU5, P31: Lindstrom, 2007).

Persisting expectations conditioned by the educational system within normalized power relations, operate even within the context of new roles that students and teachers co-create for themselves. When investigating visual culture according to perspectives from critical theory, there are implications for assumptions on which the educational system itself is based. As Shor & Freire (1987) describe:

...transformation is not just a question of methods and techniques...The question is a different relationship to knowledge and to society...We know that it's not education which shapes society, but on the contrary, it is society which shapes education according to the interests of those who have power. (p. 35)

Would a systematic inclusion of visual culture in arts education practice force a revision of the structure of arts education and the didactic paradigm of instruction? Or as Atkinson (2006) asks, why can't art educators leave obsolete structures behind when they know they aren't working anymore? There is an inherent contradiction to expect reform within the field of arts education without reforming the structure and system of schooling by addressing fundamental mismatches between authentic learning and the compartmentalization of information delivered in pieces within separated subjects and disciplines.

The gap between usefulness of schooling practices and the demands of knowledge-based economies and systems have become even more pronounced with the rapid proliferation and development of technologies. It is predicted that the curriculum being taught today is already obsolete by the time a student graduates from both secondary and tertiary systems of education, especially in disciplines focused on a transmission of factual knowledge. According to the World Bank (2002) this is tertiary education's greatest challenge in building knowledge economies as formulated by the European Council in Lisbon in 2000. According to Jaros (2004):

Knowledge has become 'the raw material on which the new technologies act.' These technologies, we are told, engender new machinic systems of thought, a 'network logic' cutting across traditional boundaries between art and science, culture and nature, nation and ethnicity. The task of an educator is to put in place curricula, staff training and delivery structures relevant to this new material condition of humanity...It is proposed to address this new agenda by developing a project-based context-driven programme of learning characterised by a shift from an input to output dominated approach. This is also a key feature of the 'Bologna project' for reforming European secondary and higher education. It stresses the student responsibility for managing their learning plan and the need to assess the course not by the audit of input but of the outcomes! (personal communication, March 12, 2004)

What impact does this have for arts education? The Romantic concept of *Beauty* as the sine qua non of artistic endeavor, while still a persistent attitude, has been replaced by the contemporary definition of what it means to be a professional artist. According to the 2005 Rand Report on Research in the Arts, an artist is someone who sells their work (McCarthy et al, 2005). This means that the vast majority of students of art in schools

experience a disconnect between the means and forms of instruction and art production, as well as the means and forms of marketing, distribution, and art related services. In the last twenty-five years, far from becoming obsolete to the products from digital technologies, according to the same report, the fine arts have become a multi-billion euro business. Experientially, however, comments from undergraduate, graduate, and even doctoral students upon viewing contemporary art images on display in galleries, consistently demonstrate the persistence of the Romantic idea of the solitary artist producing work from inspired visions to uplift the viewer (or society) into a greater experience of beauty (Tipton, 2006).

The Rand report went on to report that the single most important factor influencing participation in the arts was not primary or secondary art classes, but at least one art appreciation class in college. An example of this can be seen in the following reflection:

I think that the intertextual structures are important for the perception of images of art. It is known, that people don't like things, which they don't know. But when they know, where and how and in which conditions the piece of art originated, they start to like it. (HU4, P3: Černochová, 2006)

From one art appreciation course in college, not only were aesthetic domains and criteria extended, but preferences in kinds of art students liked and experienced, changed as well (McCarthy et al, 2005). As the percentage of college graduates in America is about 25%, and in some countries less – this implicates art itself, and not just its discourses, as a persisting practice for a socio-cultural elite. Arts education, can be implicated or lead.

In the context of implementation in existing educational institutions, visual culture's own discourses may be insufficient to address the fundamental shift that has already taken place artistically in contemporary art and society. The impact of the commodification of the visual field is already embedded in the coding systems and thinking of students and adults alike (Fulková & Tipton, 2008). Remarkably, within the 'Net generation,' there also exists a growing number of children in the world who are able to master and learn domain knowledge without the traditional learning processes that the current educational system is designed to replicate (Atwater, 2005). As people live in societies dominated by

the influence of visual information through mass media, the lack of understanding of the meaning-making process by individuals and by the society as a whole, subjugates us to the effects of the motives of mass media (Brown, 2002). Being informed appreciators, consumers, and choosers of popular culture as one goal of arts education (Chapman, 1978) is part of visual culture's *own* palimpsestic discourse. These trends represent discourses whose implications have yet to be fully represented educationally.

Con/temporary Art

Experiences of art objects and artists have been generally separated from contemporary everyday life, whereas elements of popular culture, mass media, and entertainment can be experienced daily in some form in most Westernized countries. Visual culture has generally been inclusive of elements of popular culture and mass media forms of visibility even though there are debates as to what degree and how. Experiencing the various dimensions of contemporary art practice on the other hand, is not widely used in art education curriculum and instruction.

Approaching visual culture through the study of contemporary art is one of three approaches Duncum (2003) outlines for teaching visual culture in the classroom. In practice, however, contemporary art as a site for critical visual culture has been less emphasized. Contemporary art can be found included as examples of art in DBAE curriculum as well as within progressive pre-service art education programs such as in England, Finland, Denmark, Holland, Spain, USA, Australia, Wales, and Germany. Including images of contemporary art within curriculum, however, does not necessarily mean they are approached as a vehicle for the critical investigation of socio-cultural practices or the forms and functions of visibility discourses that they may give rise to.

While they are not common, some curriculum texts introduce the concept of visual culture with contemporary art or postmodern practice such as Anderson & Milbrandt (2005); Gaudileus & Speirs; (2002), and Cahan & Kokur (1996). Using the case study method as another view into this subject, Duncum (2006) presents stories of diverse approaches to curricular innovations with popular culture subjects. But working with the

ever expanding diversities of contemporary art practice, defies all previous models and conceptions of what the visuality of art is and can be.

Contemporary art often transgresses borders and conceptions of art and visuality. Contemporary art can be raw, brazen, unruly, ugly and contemptuous. It can defy manners, social mores, and make its own nasty taboos, as much as break them [Figure 16].



Figure 16: Jenny Saville (2004) *Passage*.
Saatchi Gallery, London.

Consider this comment by a graduate student from after reading Stallabrass (2004/2006)'s article, *The Rules of Art Now*, for the Uncertain States of America exhibition at the Galerie Rudolfinum (2007-2008):

I was already in a few contemporary art exhibitions but I had always the feeling that this kind of art is not accepted; I felt a tension that this art is just a process and it has to develop itself to something better. The text opened me a perspective to regard this kind of art as art. It is good that contemporary art has a big diversity and complexity because it reflects exactly the influences of our contemporary world. We can not expect something clear and structured if the source is

excessive and uncontrolled. (HU5, P6: Malek, 2007)

Contemporary art, as an expanding domain of disruption, anarchy, deviation (Weintraub, 2003) as well as sublime mystery, unexpected surprises, unforeseen craft, creativity, and remarkable stimulation, is evocative as much as it can provocative. It becomes a container into which various visualities intersect and new codes of signification are formed, contested, punctured, and re-constituted, establishing new practices and new visualities.

One of the remarkable attributes of artistic representation is that the subject of the work of art may be different from the subject of the representation. It is this rich, expressive zone of differentiation that has long been contemplated by art historians and explored by artists. (p. 44)

Additionally, contemporary artists work within a global system of production and consumption and a system of commodification, marketing, and advertising that defies solitary considerations of reception by individual viewers. Going beyond the 'spectacle'

of a bilateral opposition between liking and disliking the art itself, to a dynamic relationship between numerous and simultaneous variables along multidimensional intersections, is the zone of contemporary art (Weintraub, 2003).

The shift into fourth-dimensional technologies has uncoupled the frame around a 'picture' and the context for a work of art, supporting the emergence of virtual reality into real-time simulations. Beyond the individual interacting with their environment, collectives of individuals now interact globally in real-time, as x-box, playbot, and other interactive, computer simulations and technologies create. Jaros (2004) calls these spacio-temporal assemblages (of things, humans, clones, events, images) that owe their existence to dynamic rather than static qualities. "The bringing to life of quasi-object assemblages depends on animations via networks of knowbots and playbots which contain the consumer as one of the principal actors" (2004, p. 2).

'Things' only 'exist' and possess particular value when they are part of (the motion of) an assemblage. For example, a student is no longer buying pure knowledge (physics or philosophy degree) or technological prescriptions via university fees but also increasingly access to an active network. This network 'animates' (acts as a 'playbot'), i.e. gives value and meaning (local and temporal rather than universal and objective) to knowledge, a meaning and territory for application, links to other such territories, etc. (p. 1)

Psycho-physically, the experience of fantasy is brought out of the individual's own imagination to a sensory experience shared in a collective, social sphere.

An example of this is artist Takumi Endo's project, *Phonethica* (<http://www.phonethica.net>) and *TypeTrace* at the Galerie Ciant, as part of the Enter3 Festival in Prague (2006) [Figure 17].

Endo explored the interface between music, new media, and language by inventing a dynamic method of interacting with their elements through chance, randomness, and diversity. In an interview about his work, *TypeTrace*, shown in Prague (2007), Endo states:

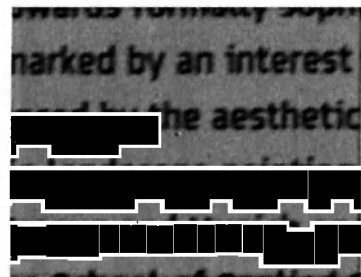


Figure 17: Takumi Endo (2006)
TypeTrace, Prague . Tipton (2006)

Every day, we read dozens of emails, some newspapers and magazine articles, several advertisement billboards and maybe a few parking tickets. We are surrounded by letters perpetually. But all these printed words and fonts are literally 'dead still,' just like rotten corpses. There is no wonder we feel so relieved when we receive hand-written notes from colleagues, or letters from our lovers; we are suddenly reminded of the richness of the pen strokes; they give you such abundant resources for guessing how, and under which mood and feeling the message was produced. The strokes are the faces of people we have forgotten a long time ago after being flooded by digital messaging tools; they let us imaginarily revive the generation of the text we face. (Galerie Ciant, 2006)

About *TypeTrace*, Endo (<http://www.inexhale.net>) states.

Originally, living organisms in general, including human beings have potential abilities/capabilities, and it is our art and technology which should contribute to activating such dormant abilities and inner capabilities as the occasion may arise. *TypeTrace* enables people to visualize anybody's thinking and writing processes, so we will gradually become aware of the secret of our own creativity. It will eventually turn into a springboard for our own further evolution. (April 2007/Ciant Gallery/Prague)

Being *within images*, is the result of experiences with virtual reality and simulation technologies provide, creating new possibilities for relating to ourselves and others. Through novel, spontaneous engagements, former 'taboos' that were relegated to Freud's concept of the id, are now integrated as virtual explorations within social and interpersonal contexts. That these experiences can be mastered and navigated with practice, shows that a new learning dimension has become possible for human beings.

Models of information processing, learning, and even of psychic structures, are shifting into new, multi-dimensional, interactive theories, structures and phenomena. The opportunity to conceive of the individual's co-creative capacity within the social context is no longer 'fixed' to what is 'real', and 'reality' as it exists in three-dimensional objects and environments. As contemporary art demonstrates, 'reality' is much more fluid and inter-dimensional than previously conceived and is no longer the only norm against which all experience is measured.

At the same time, significant social and political changes can be instigated by artists, such as Durant Sihlali's work against apartheid in South Africa. Using contemporary art

practice as a site for studying visual culture provides an opportunity to discover ways in which contemporary artists demonstrate a critical and creative approach to society and history (Harper, 1998), as well as challenging and constituting new forms and functions of art in contemporary society.

The contemporary artist these days is part theorist, performer, producer, installer, writer, entertainer, and shaman, who creates in material, matter, media, text, and time, all of which takes shape in real, simulated, and virtual worlds. These characteristics of contemporary art practice change the way we think about the visual arts, which influences what we do in educational settings. (Sullivan, 2005, p. 4)

Working with contemporary art in the classroom intervenes in the individual's pre-established ideas about what art is or how it can appear, sometimes challenging all prior personal experiences with art. Critical inquiry through contemporary art practice provokes questions and actions within a complex web of relationships between art practice, images, critical edges, and encoded socio-cultural norms, intersecting within the contemporary life-experience of the individual's own encounter with them.

Pedagogically, contemporary art can provide themes for focusing student interrogations into confluences of personal, social, political, and cultural interpretations and constructions of new meaning-making. These critiques appear and can be spontaneously woven into curriculum from student discourses about contemporary art. For example, about the video, *The Subconscious Art of Graffiti Removal*, in the *Uncertain States of America Exhibit*, a graduating Bachelor's student from Denmark writes,

...I see the film as some kind of a critique of the modern society today. It shows how the city of Portland uses a great amount of money to destroy artistic achievements and somehow end(s) up with the exact same outcome; artistic achievements, in a different form than the original though. The film makes you wonder about the American policy on this area. (HU5, P21: Poulsen, 2007)

When experiencing the work of a practicing artist, students gain a better understanding of how artistic practice is actualized within the cultural context of a contemporary artistic community (Meban, 2002). "Authentic" learning experiences are those which resemble "real life" practices and encourage learners to engage in the processes of practitioners (Brown, Duguid, & Collins, 1989). The value of such experiences is supported by

research demonstrating that when learners are provided with authentic learning situations, meaningful learning occurs.

On the contrary, it is not that studying contemporary art study deals with popular visual culture indirectly as Duncum states (2003b, p. 23), subscribing visual culture to the realm of content. Instead, visual culture is a *space* within which many visualities cohabitate and cannot easily be categorized by pre-existing theories or histories. I further argue that it is impossible to extricate either contemporary artists or viewers from popular visual culture. Popular culture is already inextricably encoded within the sensory-perceptual and interpretive systems of student/teacher experience (Fulková & Tipton, 2008). Instead of approaching critical ideas through theory, all of these particular issues and challenges can find their place inside contemporary art practice with contemporary artists, providing the means for directly examining them within the context of their actual influence, interrogations, contestations, and use within the art realm itself. “Contemporary artists transcend equivalencies, affirmations, representations” (Frange, 1998, p. 109).

Consider the work of the Riot Grrrls who,

...adopted a bold fashion with baby doll dresses and cat-eye glasses, and any would write slurs like ‘slut,’ ‘bitch,’ or ‘rape’ with black markers on their arms and bodies. These subcultural gestures and styles much like the pointed emphasis on being ‘grrrls’ rather than women, aggressively repossessed sexist labels and exorcized patriarchy. As a result, the imitable fashion attracted a second generation of even younger Riot Grrrls, who...nonetheless cultivated a far-reaching feminist peer community with a powerful network to distribute women’s music, writing, and art. (Wolf, 2004; cited in Horowitz & Sholis, 2006, p. 108)

Former ‘counter-culture’ or ‘alternative’ artists now find themselves – through popular culture venues and networks – being given critical attention from the contemporary art system and finding their way into mainstream cultural institutions. Studying them within the context of their popularity, influence and work, includes elements from popular culture, social anthropology, cultural studies, and art practice-as-research.

Artists as object-makers have already been anachronistic for a long time already, says Kwon (2002/2006). Artists like the global commodity market in the 80s shifted from the realm of producing things to being defined in relation to service and management industries.

Generally speaking, the artist used to be a maker of aesthetic objects; now he/she is a facilitator, educator, coordinator, and bureaucrat....Concurrent with, or because of, these methodological and procedural changes, there is a reemergence of the centrality of the artist as the progenitor of meaning. This is true even when authorship is deferred to others in collaborations, or when the institutional framework is self-consciously integrated into the work, or when an artist problematizes his/her own authorial role. (pp. 46-7)

Transfer of emancipatory ideals through visual culture study to the social realm solely through critical theory approaches to pedagogy, however, appears to be an uncertain mimesis. Fernández (2006) speaks of this study approach to visual culture as *pretending* to establish connections between problems, places, and times to understand personal and cultural representations of the visual world and oneself. I would venture it is because study per se, cannot make connections, only people can do that for themselves. It is why meaning cannot be taught – it must be made.

What is missing from the didactic discourse and pedagogical practice, is helping students and teachers understand the coding systems that operate in their lives and how they frame their interpretation of contemporary artistic discourses, instead of the other way around. This is not an ideology of ‘spectacle pedagogy’ where the images teach us about what and how we see and think, as Garoian & Gaudelius (2004, p. 1) describe it. Such discourse locks the framework for reception into a binary process that is passively evoked by looking at an image, and as it is written, the *image* is anthropomorphosized as the ‘teacher.’ This operates also in Burnett’s text, *How Images Think* (2004), a linguistic device that shifts the thinking from the individual to the image as a trope.

Reframing the Visual Event

The assumption of the objective standard and norm of deviation is so embedded within the Western model with its expectations of consistency, veracity, and a replicability that

the framework tends to preclude other kinds of experience from entering or fitting within its parameters. Derived from the mechanistic principles in the seventeenth century is the idea of ordered continuities. But digital technologies are based on discontinuities. The shift from analog to digital technologies in the past forty years is significant. It represents a deepening of virtual and simulated images that are not tied to traditional time-space ideas, environments, or experiences. These images have left traditional two-dimensional frameworks and inhabit four-dimensional worlds. The growth of cyberspace platforms and simulated environments has changed the relationship people have to technologies and their cultural and social forms of use. These relationships are conditioned and influenced by coding systems for which traditional literary skills are no longer sufficient for deciphering.

Simulated and virtual spaces are mapped with a coding process that makes many different assumptions about the relationship between 'code' and reality....To play in this world is to play by rules established by others, and, inevitably, this is a conferral of power to specialists....There is a need to analyze the relationship between the modeling of the real through images and codes and to compare that with interpretations of what the codes generate...It is not enough to transpose the tools of literary or film criticism to simulation. Nor is it the case that simulated images are necessarily the same as conventional images. New discourses need to be invented and more thought has to be put into the languages used to interpret and describe virtual spaces. (Burnett, 2004, p. 99)

As Mirzoeff (1999) states, "The constituent parts of visual culture, are, then, not defined by medium so much as by the interaction between viewer and viewed, which may be termed the visual event" (p. 13). Framing a visual event in this manner, however, constrains it as if it were an object. Smith-Shank's emphasis on understanding *visual information* (2004) is a good starting point for individuals building relationships with the visual world that move from unconscious reflex to being consciously reflective – regardless of the source of the information. Genres of visibility may influence the tools that one selects to work with signifying practices that do not exclude non-visual and non-textual modalities. Such tools can be contextual to the kinds of problem-finding and problem-solving pedagogical strategies and approaches used to focus attention on disparate sources of visual information. Julia Kristeva (1986) conjectures that:

If one grants that every signifying practice is a field of transpositions of various signifying systems (an intertextuality), one then understands that its 'place' of enunciation and its denoted 'object' are never single, complete and identical to themselves, but always plural, shattered, capable of being tabulated. In this way polysemy can also be seen as the result of a semiotic polyvalence – an adherence to different sign systems. (p. 111)

Because digital technologies and performance spaces have moved beyond a two-and three-dimensional experience with objects into creating fourth-dimensional, as well as cyborg and virtual spaces, I choose to use the term, *visual encounter* as the pedagogical intention, as opposed to either *visual information* - which can be experienced passively and even unconsciously, as it often is in daily life, or *visual event* which implies a interaction that has a beginning and an end. An encounter, on the other hand, intentionalizes the interaction as an exchange of meanings and opens it to diverse communities of practice, artmaking, critical social semiotics, and other modalities and systems of interpretation. The term *visual encounter* becomes the means by which visual culture is accessed, thus defining those encounters where there is a visual element present. This leaves the source of the encounter open to be inclusive of popular visual culture experiences, museum collections, advertising, performance art, installations, software, simulations, film, media, and other forms of visual information that move across space and time, contexts of presentation, derivations, and originations.

Working also with the visual culture of contemporary art as an encounter through dialogic inquiry, scholarly texts, reflective writing, media, e-platforms, and artmaking, is a way in which visual culture is reconstituted and continues to recreate itself inside each person and subsequent intertextuality - long after the encounter itself. It is for this reason I do not solely stay within critique or viewing, but create a multimodal context within an overall process of *exchanging* personal experiences of visual encounters. It is for this reason it may be more inclusive to be speaking of visual *cultures* as a plurality, as both culture and visual *studies* imply. In this sense, the language would also reference visual dialogues, as well as visual cultures.

As these encounters are not just pastiches of all prior and current experience, but can be constituted into new ones, they contain elements of creative thinking that has the capacity to bring what is *not seen or known* or previously existed, into being. Thus, I argue that it is an artificial distinction to separate popular from visual culture, just as it has already been contested to separate out 'high' art, as if such distinctions were based on inherencies and not situational values (Harris, 2001). Whereas postmodernism rejected Kantian inherencies as the basis of pre-determined aesthetic criteria that are revealed - examining how visual qualities were/are conditioned to be seen the way they were conceived, is part of a semiotic domain. A reconceptualization of visual encounters works to form the context and power of visual culture art education: it is possible to *witness* diverse manifestations of visibility by suspending critique as well as judgment in order to experience them as they are - to us - at that moment, regardless of what other moments may bring into the 'picture'. Critique alone cannot do this because it is always comparing one thing to another in terms of its organizing perspectives that are embedded within positions of subordination and domination. At the same time, the richness and complexity of visibility provides the potential to enter into a confluence of visual elements and qualities from multiple, and even contradictory perspectives and cohabitate them.

Bridging Theory to Practice

With no agreement on the definitions, curriculum and methodology of visual culture (Duncum, 2003; Freedman, 2003), its implementation has no concrete concurrence. Visual culture as a part of arts education curriculum and academic programs of study at the university level, tends to be critically dialectical and didactic. Lock step curriculum at the K-12 level; lecture/presentations, discussion, research papers, individual and group projects at the university level (Tipton, 2004), and studio work separated from theoretical study (Sullivan, 2005), demonstrate the disconnect between theory and practice (Hermann, 2005). Thus, the gap between the transfer of new theoretical insights into classroom practice, is a major challenge to art educators (Galbraith, 1993; Stuhr, 2003; Slavík, 2006). Left to classroom and specialist teachers whose perceptions, expertise, resources, or curriculum frameworks may not be sufficient to support the transliteration

of new knowledge into new practice, the process of progressive, educational change in schools is challenged at all levels (Štech, 2006; Slavík, 2006; Tipton, 2002; Tipton, 2006; Stankiewicz, 1997).

While the context of the educational system in which any author is writing from, exerts an invisible yet dominating discourse, the conundrum is that visual culture is often treated as the presence of iconography from popular culture or involves projects interacting with popular culture artifacts or phenomena used for student artwork. Curriculum suggestions for visual culture (i.e. Barrett, 2003; Keifer-Boyd, 2003; Freedman, 2003; Stockrocki 2006 to name a few), tend to be aimed towards lessons and projects that identify popular culture iconography and critically analyze them according to popular culture's influence on perceptions, attitudes and beliefs. Directives from these texts often tell educators what *should* be done, along with *must* be done and *need to*. These materials for teaching, like the systems in which they function, tends to establish prescriptions of what *should* be done to or for 'others' they are addressed to, as their own dominating discourse. Schwarz (2001) recasts this by stating, "For even if we alter *what* we teach – changing the canon, shifting our analytic frameworks – this does not in itself effect *how* we organize classroom practice" (p. 104).

It is as if the need to be certain of what visual culture *is* drives the pedagogy to *do*, while the great, unknowingness that flounders inside oppositional discourses illuminates only a deeper insecurity that the field of art education, in general, holds about itself. Perhaps the need to look to analysis by theory as a precondition for pedagogical content is a symptom of the challenge how to translate VCAE discourses into practice. Arts educators for whom these discourses are intended, find themselves within an uncertain intersection of complex, paradoxical, and sometimes conflicting factors. The perspective of reducing 'reality' into sequential, interrelated parts in order to gain insight into objective 'truths,' however popular and pervasively used, does not fit into a postmodern condition of art and culture. In new pedagogical spaces, pre-existing conditions and even answers can subvert the process of excavating interrelational webs of information where *not* knowing can also be an important navigator through undefined and unfamiliar terrain. It can be easier to not

go there. As such, visual culture art education has not freed itself from the traditional object/subject distinction in modernist pedagogies, and itself is presented as an object of study by others, who in turn become its subject. This is the conundrum of the academic spectacle.

Freedman's (2003) suggestion to begin teaching visual culture assignments and courses through *idea development*, is perhaps what Hernández (2000) termed 'new-traditional' curriculum. On the other hand, 'eclectic' arts educators (Duncum, 2003b) [Figure 18],

whose innovations advance theory from practice, may start with *not knowing*. When it is possible to shift one's positionality from *knowing* to *not knowing* and use it as a starting point of investigation without recrimination or censure, perhaps it will be easier for arts educators to intuitively enter unfamiliar territory without fear.



Figure 18: Jan Smid with his third grade class at Zarby Basic School, Prague. Smid (2006).

Visual culture is perhaps better understood as a messy intersection of meaning-making factors that oscillate between process, content, perception, psychology and critique - operating sometimes simultaneously through multiple lenses that the individual may not even be aware of. Instead, the relationship of arts education to visual culture functions like a work of art - hardly any two people see it the same way. Perhaps what is needed is an attitude and approach to individual interpretation and meaning-making in art - what Jeffers (1993) calls a living relationship between research-as-art and art-as-research. I can imagine this as a critically *empty* space where both processes intersect and inform each other, not solely as interrogations but as creative investigations that inhabit each other while constituting each and another at the same time.

CHAPTER 2: RE/SHAPING ARTS EDUCATION BY RETHINKING KNOWLEDGE

“The world-as-it-is is more than pure objective fact, it includes consciousness.”

-John Berger (1972, p. 11)

What are the Lessons of Cognitive Science

At stake for the future of visual culture art education is the fundamental need to reconceptualize what knowledge is, how it functions not just as categorizations but also within different ways of knowing and thinking. In art education, the opposition between an objectively intellectual and a subjectively emotional approach to art (Kaufman, 1967), became an opposition between approaches emphasizing personal self-expression and learning domain content, reflecting a historical separation between emotion and cognition that can be traced even to Plato. But the shift from behaviorism to cognitive-based models in arts education in the 1980's, (Efland, 1995), has come with its own incomplete use of cognitive science's research findings and their implications for brain-based learning.

Persistent ideas of learning based in nineteenth and early twentieth century thinking includes the metaphor of the brain as a computer. Researchers now see the brain as a far more flexible, self-adjusting entity--an ever-changing organism that grows and reshapes itself in response to challenge, with elements that wither if not used (Abbott & Ryan, 1999). Limited by the belief that theories give true knowledge of reality, scientific norms adopted since the seventeenth century, participate in a false sense that thought and knowledge are both *reporting* on reality. Thought has been conditioned to get rid of uncertainty and unknowns and is treated as if it is independent of the gestalt in which it participates.

Cognitive science helps arts/educators understand that the brain's functioning is not purely compartmentalized into separate regions of the brain, but that specific areas in the brain are activated simultaneously (Solso, 1993, p. 32). Natural 'parallel processing' can

be supported pedagogically by being reflecting in our learning environments. In arts education, this has significant implications for a semiotic pedagogy for visual culture art education.

Congruently, the learning path itself is naturally non-linear (Doll, 1999). Through active learning, the learner is not a passive recipient but a generative initiator. Each new fact or experience is assimilated into a pre-existing network of cognitive structures in an ever-evolving web of understanding, that shifts and moves (Abbott & Ryan, 1999). It is not static nor is it cumulative in the hierarchical sense most schools are structured. Cope and Kalantzis (2000) refer to this as a shift from hierarchical, pyramid systems to 'distributed systems.'

In these systems, many small, efficient, and self-controlled local units act in fluid, flexible, and sometimes ephemeral combinations (networks, patterns) so as to adapt to and transform 'environments' (contexts) to which they are integrally linked. (p. 44)

In 'distributed systems,' learning does not fit neatly into parcels, as most curriculum is divided and delivered to students in the skill-based transmission model through sequential segments. The ever-increasing pace of change has made the ability to learn far more important than any particular skill set (Mintrop, 2001). Supporting this concept, Cope and Kalantzis go on to say:

...cognitive science increasingly defines human intelligence as the flexible and context-sensitive manipulation of patterns (dynamic images), rather than in terms of following general decontextualized rules. (p. 45)

In this context, Bohm (1990) argued that until a *proprioception of thinking* is developed, any new educational content will merely be add-on to the existing ways in which the world is thought about and hence *seen*.

Re/presenting Thought

To inquire into the question of how knowledge is to be understood as process, it is acknowledged first that all knowledge is produced, displayed, communicated, transformed, and applied in *thought*. Thought, considered in its *movement of becoming*

(and not merely in its content of relatively well-defined images and ideas) is the process in which knowledge has its actual and concrete existence (Bohm, 1994, p. 50).

Developing relationships to the constellations of one's thoughts is a formative field of meta-cognition, where information is not stored or recalled in the brain as separate pieces of data but which form free-floating cognitive structures and through which knowledge is constructed (La Violette, 1982). Bohm, who searched for a philosophy of mind with creativity as its heart, called this process a creative act equivalent to the artistic process. (Bohm, 1998).

In order to understand how meaning is constituted in thought processes, it is helpful to examine Bohm (1994)'s model of the systematic working of thought by symbols and representations. Thought itself can be considered a representation. A representation is always a certain form, an abstraction interpreted as a symbol with physical components, but is not necessarily tied to material characteristics. A symbol, on the other hand, is somewhat ambiguous and open. The mind attributes qualities to symbols according to the past and partly by what is observed (Bohm, 1994, p. 106). Bohm uses the example that the word 'rainbow' gives rise to a certain form – a representation - and to the form, attributes are attached according to what the person thinks is and is not a rainbow. Although the rainbow is a process and not an actual object, the representation from the word 'rainbow' is *objectified* by the way in which it is spoken and thought about it. Each person constructs how they make sense of the world in thoughts in the same manner. This is a system of codifying information, not just classifying it (Goodman, 1976).

We have to say that everything we know is a form, which we sort of project onto the background of consciousness – as we do with the rainbow. It can be projected correctly or incorrectly; it's not that every form is as good as every other... You can see that this thing is done not only individually, but even more so collectively. By sharing our thought and consciousness we are projecting forms into everything. (Bohm, 1994 p. 175)

According to Bohm, most of what is considered to be *true* arises in the manner that a rainbow is believed to be an object and not a process of light refracting rain to which an

image is associated. A self-deception inherent in the system of thought is that thought is always trying to claim that it knows everything (Bohm, 1994).

To inquire into the question of how knowledge is to be understood as process, we first note that all knowledge is produced, displayed, communicated, transformed, and applied in *thought*. Thought, considered in its *movement of becoming* (and not merely in its content of relatively well-defined images and ideas) *is* indeed the process in which knowledge has its actual and concrete existence. (p. 50)

Goodman (1976) rejected scientific hegemony as “irrealism” and standards of objectivity as simply *relata*, or in other words, versions of a particular kind of representation. As all *relata* are versions, no one version of *relata* exists devoid of the context from which it arises. (Kristeva (1986) points to the historical uncoupling of culturally ascribed meanings of symbols in the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries that opened up symbol systems to be reconstituted as sign systems. Text, as another kind of sign system, finds its relationship to other types of sign systems through a process of codification that is individually negotiated and interpreted.

Applying a meta-awareness of the contents and process of thinking to reveal the processes and structures of *thought* as it manifests individually and collectively in group settings, Bohm (1994) developed a process of group dialogue.

To inquire into the question of how knowledge is to be understood as process, we first note that all knowledge is produced, displayed, communicated, transformed, and applied in *thought*. Thought, considered in its *movement of becoming* (and not merely in its content of relatively well-defined images and ideas) *is* indeed the process in which knowledge has its actual and concrete existence. (p. 50)

Bohm examines thought’s movement of becoming by cultivating a non-judgmental witness to distinguish between thoughts as memories, acts of perception, abstractions, and semi-automatic thoughts, from those that arise from intelligence, where fresh insights, new orders of understanding, distinctions of relevancy, and new structures are perceived

Besides images, thought also exists in other sensory modalities, including movement, light, and sound. As Bohm argued, dialogic inquiry is an important tool to develop meta-cognition. Thus, thinking about images solely as ‘text’, limits the way in which visual

knowledge not only functions and exists through multiple modalities, but how it can become.

If aligning teaching and learning implies optimizing how learning is designed, then new school instructional practices and structures are also necessary. And if the material of pedagogical concern has shifted, then so, too, will its methods. How then, can new models of classroom practice based with a *proprioception of thinking* for learning and teaching, be brought to bear on the visual culture of arts education?

Semiosis as a Framework for Practice

Semiosis is based on the examination of relationships between sign, symbol or code, their representations, and interpreted characteristics. Semiosis mediates the interrelationships between words, symbols, and interpretants, from which meaning is created.

Because the sign does not stand for the object 'in all respects,' then the sign abstracts from the object. 'To abstract from,' however, entails selection. Selection entails choice. Choice requires criteria of selection. Criteria of selection necessarily rest on values. That is, the relationship of the sign to the object is value-determined. Thus, the Ground carries out its function as the locus of [signification] – when it is suffused by – a set of values. (Favareau, 2002, p. 10)

Societies are constructed systems of shared signs and symbols, communicated through mutually agreed upon or understood values. *Reality* can be considered what culturally-bound symbol systems at any given moment in time and place, reveal.

Using Bohm's previous example, the word *rainbow* acts as a symbol or sign, which evokes the representation of a concept called 'rainbow', even when the rainbow phenomenon itself is not visible. Its interpretant provides a representation of what *rainbow* means, which differentiates what a rainbow is considered to be, from that which it is not. How a set of interpretants is defined individually determines whether the system is open or closed. Semiosis, then, as a process of examining sign relationships of all forms, makes it possible to examine the construction of meanings associated with words and symbols across many interrelated contexts.

As cognitive structures are built from relationships of meaning, if the basis of our thinking is flawed, as concept builders, cognitive structures will magnify flawed thinking into new and unexpected dimensions. Concomitantly, semiosis helps create an organizing framework for a proprioception of thinking to function, in order to examine ideas and concepts more closely and possibly create new meanings and interpretations from them. Consider this reflection from an undergraduate student in Plzeň after a session querying beliefs and responses to contemporary art.

...I realized how I perceive today's world from the point of beauty and aestheticism. Until this time I wasn't in general able to find sense in today's art, I wasn't able to say how an art work talks. This meeting was unbinding of information, which I had and could not see. Also I'm more able now (to) express my own opinion about things, art works. (HU3, P2)

According to Talbot (1992), our minds function as a kind of *holographic plate* with encoded images to which *interference patterns* are ascribed meaning through signifiers. The process is similar to the semiotic interplay of signs and objects through interpretants. The basic flaw of thought as Bohm describes, happens when thought speaks as if the holographic image, is independently *real*. In essence, the way in which individuals solidify the products of representations by considering them fixed entities with certain values, leads to certain mirages.

A telling application of Bohm's ideas can be seen in the artwork *Negative Capability. The Michael Jackson Project* by Edgar Arceneaux and Rodney McMillian, which appeared in the *Uncertain States of America* exhibition at the Galerie Rudolfinum (2007-8) after the Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art in Oslo. The artists worked collaboratively to explore the question of how Jackson as a person, performer, and a cultural entity came to be what he is. Connecting Gladys Knight's ballad *Memories*, the character Boo Radley from the book *To Kill A Mockingbird*, and material on Jackson, their art-as-research collaboration included a visit to Jackson's childhood home in Gary, Indiana. In an interview about their work in the *Uncertain States of America* catalogue (2005), McMillian shares an anecdote about the research process:

When we came upon the house of Jackson we were surprised by its disrepair. The windows were boarded up, it was graffitied and the roof had collapsed from a fire. It related well to ideas we had about the American Dream.

After several hours of documenting the house and its neighborhood, a gentleman informed us that we were standing in front of the wrong house. In actuality, it was a very small, white, non-descript house, which was exactly one block away. However it was the *ruin* that met our expectations. Those expectations were more real than the real thing. (p. 19).

This text shows how a sense of reality was produced through the projection of a form and idea. At the same time, it reveals the focus of the artists' project as their growing awareness of their own process of thought projection. Arceneaux and McMillian conclude about their work [Figure 19]:

Our primary goal was to create a discussion around the type of dynamic that he inspires. This approach was in synch with our process of trying to make sense out of someone who actively confounds such endeavors. Thus the work is a series of references and relationships. No text, image, sound or construction leads to a conclusion about Jackson. It simply points to ideas and fascinations around him. (p. 19)



Figure 19: Detail from Edgar Arceneaux (2004). *Negative Capability. The Michael Jackson Project*. Galerie Rudolfinum. Tipton (2007)

Re/Interpreting Semiosis

More broadly defined and understood today within the context of interdisciplinary scholarship, semiosis gives a form in which to utilize Bohm's proprioception of thought. Bohm clearly raises the need for awareness of the interactivity between the representations the mind makes, whereas Favareau extends this further, to the mental constructions themselves. Favareau answers Locke's 300 year-old call for a science of representation to examine, "the signs the mind makes use of," (Favareau, 2002, p. 2) with his concept of neurosemiosis, which examines the nature of mental representation from neuronal electro-chemical signals. For, "...first of all and most radically, a sign is neither a thing nor an object but the pattern according to which things and objects interweave to make up the fabric of experience" (Deely, 1990, cited by Favareau, p. 10).

... 'representation' is a process of 'built' and massively co-constructed active *mediation* amongst elements (CP: 4.3)¹ in a complex, open system which ultimately allows the human organism to transcend the brute indexicality of

physically present, coextensive and discrete relate and to participate *interactively* across its own organizational levels – levels which include the intrinsically dynamic elements of neuron, body, sign and world. (Favareau, 2002, p. 4-5)

As Favareau states, “...neural activity *is* sign-activity...” (2002, p. 6). According to Favareau, the mind is made up of incessant sign activity, which is recursively interactive, a generative process by which representation causes other representations to emerge. This, “...never-ending sign-exchange activity mediating cell, brain, body, and world” (Favareau, p. 12), is what Sebeok calls, “spinning interpretants” (cited by Smith-Shank, 1995, p.1). Significantly, recent research in the neurobiology of vision, especially the groundbreaking work of Semir Zeki (1993, 1999) demonstrate conclusively that sensory precepts such as visual images are not so much ‘received’ from incoming photon impulses as they are semiotically and co-constructively ‘built’ across heterogeneous and massively intercommunicating brain areas (Favareau, 2002, p. 8).

While Favareau’s work may seem to be a reinterpretation of Peircian semiosis, as he himself explains, “...the very processes whereby representation emerges, is exchanged, and causes other representations to emerge ad infinitum, is essentially an embodiment of the semiotic triadicity of Peirce” (2002, p. 20).

If we understand *semiosis* to be an organizing principle of *all* manner of sign-exchange, then the operational processes enabling *signification* from receptor cell to interneuron to effector cell and the processes enabling signification across the meta-systems of biological organization (cell, pathway, network, organ, system, body proper) and across levels of awareness (network signification, body signification, mental signification) reveal themselves as systemic parts in a lawful, interactive continuum – a view of mind and body that allows us to transcend the intransigent dualism of a contemporary neuroscience...(Favareau, p. 9)

Favareau extends this thinking further, saying “...our visual ‘representations’ emerge as complex co-constructions of massively distributed, non-linear processes of interaction which culminate in – but in their constituent parts no way fully constitute – the experienced visual image” (p. 11).

Semiotically, this visual network of organizational relations is only to be expected, as the evolution of the eye itself rests upon the evolution of a cell which has, over eons of

interaction, been tuned to respond selectively to a range of photon configurations in the surrounding environment – a selectivity that ranges on the level of the single neuron from gross e.g. light detection, wavelength perception to extremely fine-tuned e.g. individual shapes, movement trajectories, and even highly specific faces, fingers, mouths and hands. Such cells in the aggregate interact with a vast distribution of other selectively specialized cells in the human brain to actively co-construct or ‘build’ a visual image that is not the product of brute mechanical reception and transmission, but of *semiosis* (Favareau, 2002, p. 8).

While exploring an in-depth relationship between thought, mind, and the brain is not the specific focus of this study, attention to these distinctions and interactions as elements in the meaning-making process, shifts interpretation from the rational positivism of inherency within fixed elements, as the historicity of art emphasized, to the dynamism and fluidity of multidimensional simultaneities, a trichotomy.

What is interesting to consider is how will the ubiquity of today’s mass arts, build new receptor cells in the eye for the ‘net’ generation? Using semiosis as the basis for understanding of how meaning is *seen* as well as mapped, helps retrieve what is lost by the dualistic split of ‘observer’ and ‘observed’. Developing a ‘proprioception of thinking’ as visual arts pedagogy with students in art education challenges how discourses are constructed and interpreted, thus reconstituting what is considered knowledge, truth, and reality.

Towards a Visual Semiosis

Distinguishing between a semiotics that was adopted from linguistic criticism and that which is adapted to visual sign systems is necessary in order to acknowledge the differentiation between lingual and non-lingual symbol systems (Goodman, 1976). Visual semiosis as I use it, is a process of mediation between sign systems with their corresponding ‘languages’, referents, and significations. A proprioception of thinking in combination with visual semiosis examines the interaction between reception, cognition, and signification that is not fixed to inherency per se, but that operates within a dynamic

field of experience. According to Bal & Bryson (1991), "...the text or artwork cannot exist outside the circumstance in which the reader reads the text or the viewer views the image" (p. 178). Increasingly broken down by digital media virtual, simultaneity, it becomes a false dichotomy to speak of these functions in either/or terms. The so-called 'reader' is performing both reading and viewing at the same time.

Visual semiosis within constructivist pedagogy, recognizes that any signification is constructed and constellated within various kinds and modalities of sign systems that are constituted through the personal experience of socio-cultural practices. Using visual semiosis as a tool for interacting with visual encounters is an approach to critically examine systems of meaning-making, their contexts, and use, while addressing the modes and functions of art in present-day communities (Fulková & Tipton, 2007).

Developments in the area of cognitive science, such as neurosemiosis, give further support to the concept of semiosis as an inherent way in which the brain organizes and processes information through signs (Favareau, 2002). Recent research findings in neurosemiosis, have dispelled the idea that images exist independently of cognition (Favareau, 2002; Talbot, 1992). And yet arts education pedagogies still operate in a cause-and effect, stimulus-response model as if they do. Neurosemiosis as a concept and a theoretical framework can be used as the basis for developing a new model representing a systemic, psycho-social dynamic grounded in a physiology of personal experience, leading to a restructuring of the way in which visuality is conceived of and taught.

A new way of defining semiosis through visual mediation, reconceptualizes discourses about the development and representation of symbols, signs and coding systems as an interplay between emotions, reason, context, and social connections (Serig, 2006). Exploring and playing with individual interpretations of these intersections, can facilitate development of neo-narratives (Stewart, 1997). An understanding of the dynamic, constellating complexity of individually adaptive interpretive frameworks naturally follows.

Seeing from a "Beside" Place

According to Kuhn (1962), studies are encapsulated within paradigms that operate with their own internal logic. Paradigms operate as shared commitments to beliefs and values. Paradigm formation is an individual moment by moment construction (Kuhn, 1962). A 'paradigm shift' is sensorial and immediate, as well as epistemological and historical. The pervasiveness of the scientific paradigm and its focus on empirically-based information, such as 'facts' or 'arti-facts' which are interpreted and patterned into categorizations, has increasingly evolved into a rejection of scientific hegemony as the 'sine qua non' of knowing. As it operates within scientific discourse framed by rationalism, data as 'information' is identified, quantified, abstracted and reified, with its assumption of being 'objective,' tends to operate as a fixed knowledge system. But rejection of its premises is still debated within the constructs of its existing paradigm. What is called for is not yet another and different version of 'intrinsic' knowledge, but a process by which the apparitions of knowledge can be construed and reconstructed in an open-system, not only within a closed one. Both are useful for different purposes, but the existence of one does not necessitate precluding the other.

Part of the paradigm shift underway in education is the acknowledgement of the authority of the individual to discover the meaning and use of information and to engage in their own, self-directed, knowledge-constructing processes. This decenters the scientific paradigm as the sine qua non of knowledge production and its validity constructs for other systems, modalities, and ways of knowing. In the language of Eve Sedgwick (2003), decentering the scientific paradigm locates it into a 'beside' place - along side - other knowledge systems, by asking the question, "What does knowledge do?" (p. 124).

The indigenous Iroquois nation, whose federation pre-dated the settlement of North America and became the model for Rousseau's idea of democracy, established the precedent of honoring each individual voice in council with others (Houston & Rubin, 1995) Respecting each person's voice, not as an abstracted, totalizing entity, but situated

within their own 'standpoint' (Harding, 1993), emphasizes the locations of those whose views have been marginalized outside of traditional, academic discourses.

Interestingly, it is possible to witness how the opportunity to find and express personal authority from one's own standpoint, often starts with a totalizing voice, generalizing personal impressions to various others. In the following case-study example, a graduate student from Finland reflects after a visit to Hunt Kastner Artworks:

When we are talking about art, we connect usually to our reflections the concept of the aesthetic experience. We find art there where we can experience something deep and aesthetic. (HU2, P2: Melanen, 2006)

The anonymous others who are being spoken for are an abstracted and generalized 'we.' At the same time, her discourse reflects a modernist view of art as mediated by the aesthetic experience. Her voice generalizes for others. But by the end of the seminar reflecting on the process of reflecting, she has a new insight about the above reflection:

The issues were so abstract and subjective that it was easy to get lost in to your own thoughts. In the first reflection I even forget to handle the exhibition (by César Martínez) which would have eased and rationalized the outcome. The artist was handling also the aesthetics of waste and trash (in a critical way) - that could have been one place to find art. (HU2, P6: Melanen, 2006)

The first-person voice begins to take hold. What she has missed in this later reflection is not just the objectification of Martínez's art as a site for interpretation of 'the aesthetics of waste and trash' as *art*, but engagement with his art itself. As Martínez writes about his inflatable sculptures in the exhibit, *El imperdurablemente presente (Temporary Present)*:

Air is the body of the soul, the unsubstantial matter of life. The basic transfer of hydrogen atoms from donors to receivers...It is also the breath that reduces and expands us. Nitrogen and oxygen; life's equation. This is where my interest in inflatable sculptures, soft sculptures, blown sculptures, comes from. (Hunt Kastner Artworks, 2006)

Molded on real people and sculpted into life-like figures constantly inflating and collapsing with automatically pumped air every 30 seconds, Martínez explains that the process of his sculptures reflects that the same air that gives us life also kills us [Figure 20].

He sets a political commentary on pollution within the context of numbing, repeating actions that tether people into an autonomy of their own death. Instead of engaging with the discourses in the visual, artistic, and curatorial texts of the work, the student appears to be looking for art in a concept and not in its

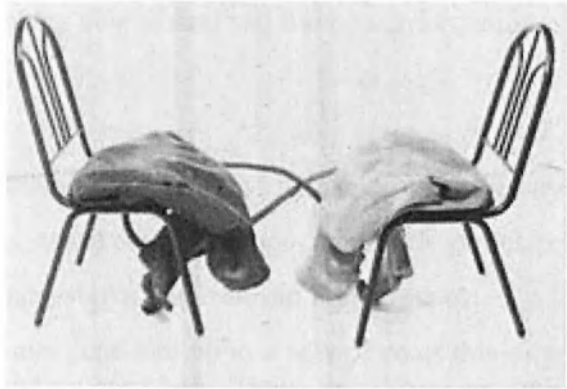


Figure 20: César Martínez (2002). *Lo otro en si mismo*. Hunt Kastner Artworks (2006).

experiential existence in front of her. Her attention instead, was focused on answering a 'big' question about where is art found, that she missed examining how the artist answers the question for himself. In her final self-assessment, she is able to comment on her own growth in awareness of the process of writing reflections and how it has influenced her:

In my earlier studies I have not (written) reflections, usually just essays where there is no room for free expression and extra notes. In the beginning of our meetings the idea of reflections was quite complex and problematical, for example, should reflection resemble the structure and causality of essay or should it be more like notes for me (?) To express that some art is really stunning or then displeasing for me is something that I have not (gotten) used to. I think it might be common way in Finland, we (are) used to express ourselves politely and without sharpness....

One of my learnings is to ask questions, both in the writings and during the conversations. If you are ready to point out something, you should be ready to explain it and to answer to the question why. A good example from this was when one of my friend(s) was watching a book from a Czech artist Jan Saudek and his photographs. My friend mentioned some of her impressions from it and I wanted to make it clear why the photographs made her feel bad and why they were just pornography for her. Finding the relevant questions for the context and respondent is demanding - how to inquire about personal opinions without insulting or putting pressure on. (HU2, P6: Melanen, 2006)

The danger of a tyrannical, uniformity of thinking and behaving, as Martínez's work illustrates when differences are not acknowledged and connected but stay autonomous fragments, is a sophisticated discourse that requires that the student is able to break out of mimetic structures of thinking where schooling has conditioned thought to repeat back what has been given, and make connections to a wider set of relationships that situate abstractions into one's own life experience. 'Knowing something' is shifting from being

able to remember and repeat information to being able to find and use how information is personally meaningful.

On the other hand, from the point of view of the practicality of managing the diversity and variety of personal standpoints within instructional practices, a Czech professor working with American undergraduates in study-abroad programs in Prague states:

I enjoy it when a group can discuss content and end up in a new place of thinking, but some groups dissipate and don't end up anywhere. They check email on their computers, eat food, get up and leave and come back on their own and then when I say anything about it they call me a despot trying to control their thinking. (Jonsonová, personal communication, February 2, 2007)

The mismatch between various authority systems, cultural norms of behavior, and the conditioning of projected expectations, can create a c/overt rebellion against them. At stake in the transposition of paradigms, is the initial recognition of a fundamental disconnect between systems of knowledge production and use and perceptions of relevancy by students. If 'content' is interpreted to mean information given by an expert voice to others who listen, the idea of groups of people learning together through looking, responding, reflecting, and discussing within a dialogic and reflective process, may not be perceived as sufficient 'content'. Equally, content that is not perceived to be relevant or chosen to be learned can be dismissed as boring. There is a need for learning how to develop shared agreements and creating an atmosphere of mutual collaboration towards meeting agreed-upon learning goals.

As post-modernism (Lyotard, 1986) has affected nearly all disciplines and gained ascendancy in the humanities (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2004), its presence as an interpretive structure of thinking is nearly ubiquitous. On the other hand, another mismatch in arts education is that classifications from art historians and their corresponding interpretations of socially validated art produced within them, is the basis for the content-driven system of arts education taught in public and private schools around the world (Pearse, 1992; Wolcott, 1996). Art history as inquiry, suffers from the theory to practice divide instructionally when postmodernism is considered only a style of art.

Postmodernism in arts education, (Duncum, 2003; Barrett, 2003; Smith-Shank, 2002; Cunningham, 1999) has shifted thinking from the absolutes of meta-narratives towards information-based perspectives that advocate for multiplicities of communities of meaning across 'phrase regimes'. The postmodern approach replaces the modernist point of view of defined systems of classifications with a plurality of perspectives and interpretations (Meban, 2002; Doll, 1993). A postmodern pedagogy of art uses socio-cultural contexts in which images are reference points for the construction of meaning. Neither transmission nor transference based, but transformative by nature (Meban, 2002), postmodernism became the initial pedagogical framework for VCAE. While postmodernism advocates for paying attention to things in their particularity and not just abstract conceptualizations (Lyotard, 1986), its implementation in art education theory within the practice of deconstruction, has tended towards the disavowal of modernism and previous historical narratives and a confusion from appropriating linguistic-based theories of meaning to visual art.

As a postmodern curriculum device, interactive multimedia (Cason, 1998) and hypertext (Tavin, 2003) emerged in the late '80s as pedagogical tools and computerized platforms that provided the possibility for multimodal linkages and perspectives to be connected to the same topic, theme, or concept. The development of new knowledge-based businesses and learning organizations, stimulated and supported by the advances in the use of hypertext and interactive multimedia technologies, have already changed the nature of predetermined knowledge, as is currently taught in schools (Tipton, 2002), providing the means for paradigm transpositions in education.

Constructing the Semiotic Field

Creating new ways of thinking about what is possible in visual arts education and in educational pedagogy requires shifting from the persistent behaviorist model of curriculum in the classroom, to one that is based on the open-ended principles of constructivist learning. Constructivism is an operative term. If what is considered

knowledge is changing, then even understanding what constructivism is and what it can do, will also change. Developed through active learning, constructivism implies that the learner is not a passive recipient but a generative initiator. Each new fact or experience is assimilated into a pre-existing web of cognitive structures in the mind (Abbott & Ryan, 1999). An ever-evolving web of understanding, cognitive structures are not static nor are they cumulative in the hierarchical sense most schools are structured. The rhizomatic network shifts and moves within its own rhythm and flow.

If the neural structure of the brain is open-ended, then a learning process that supports, encourages and enhances the dynamic interaction between the environment and the individual's open-ended learning process is its corollary.

The most promising new developments in education involve restructuring school activities and discourse so that they resemble in some fashion the workings of research groups—where real questions are being investigated and students are trying to contribute to progress on those questions. (Bereiter, 1999, p. 20)

Educators find themselves in the same position as students – in need of new skill and process-based competency-sets (Slavík, 2006). Developing and extending new relationships to information, is not just new knowledge, but being *present* to it in new ways. It is what Scharmer (2007) calls, 'Theory U'. Theory U is a process of presenting the capacity of emergent creative vision and acting by bringing it into being (p. 8). In shifting Bohm's emphasis on thoughts to the 'interior condition' from which thoughts arise, Scharmer (2007) asks, "...how can we access, activate, and enact the deeper layers of the social field?" in order to operate from the future as it emerges (p. 8). The dialogic and reflective process provides a lens through which these questions find form.

On the other hand, school structures are decidedly slow, if not also antagonistic to embracing new ways of structuring and designing learning experiences. Perhaps public educational institutions are not fully equipped or ready to embrace these ideas. But constructivism helps redefine the way the teacher interacts with the content, the student, and materials for learning by allowing the learning process to open up towards self-organizing systems of thinking and doing. Based on the 'fact' that the brain makes connections and weaves them together as relationships, constructivism asks that our

teaching and learning practices educationally, do so as well. The ever-increasing pace of change has made the ability to learn far more important than any particular skill set. (Mintrop, 2001). Constructivism provides the context and tools to redesign the way in which the variables of school settings are arranged, providing a new direction in forging relationships between teachers and students, ways of knowing and learning, and ultimately with the world at large. This is *finding one's way*, making the road by walking (Horton & Freire, 1990).

Reforming Visual Thinking

In the last century, a universal language of art took shape in modernism, which applies a scientific, rationalist framework to formal delineations by identifying immutable and essential knowledge-based elements (Clark, 1996). Postmodernism shifts away from the modernist focus on particular works of art and their formal elements – such as line, space, shape, color, content, media, etc. - to a broader consideration of interpretive frameworks. Slattery (1995) contends that sensitivity to physical, psychological, spiritual, and social environments (spaces) is an integral part of any postmodern curriculum (p. 5).

Postmodernism also offers a social critique that challenges assumptions about the relationships between objects, viewers, environments, and society. Nevertheless, while pedagogical practice has shifted in art education over the past twenty-five years, the aesthetic values of the Romantic era are still embedded within young adults' judgments about what constitutes 'good' art. A preference for unity, order, and balance, for instance – that are the qualities upheld by the Ancient Greeks and later valorized in the Enlightenment as the signs of beauty - may still be found in the discourses of under/graduate students (Fulková & Tipton, 2008). These beliefs and values organize students' experiences of the artworks that they encounter.

An alternative approach to students' experiences of art is suggested by the work of Arnheim (1969/1997), who established a correspondence between 'seeing' (or perception) and thinking, and thus, opened the way for a notion of *visual thinking*. To date, the correspondence to *visual knowledge* has been largely ignored by the educational realm in general, which is reluctant to explore the connection between visual thinking and the generation of a specifically *visual mode of knowledge*. Instead, educational systems understood 'knowledge' as a synonym for universal 'facts' or 'truth' often legislated for measurement through students' performance in oral or written assessments. Goodman (1976) demonstrated the inadequacy of oral/written linguistic concepts as notation for non-lingual and non-text-based symbol systems, and developed his understanding of *visual thinking* processes as part of *visual languages*. As a result, the move from *visual*

thinking to *visual intelligence* has been addressed increasingly as a problem of *visual literacy* (Perkins, 1990). Visual literacy tends to be identified and assessed without attention to the processes that drive systems and contexts of reception and perception. Ironically, 'proof' of knowledge of visual languages in art still takes place primarily within the terms of oral and written language.

The same bias toward rational inquiry has prevailed in the field of art education where until recently artistic practice was excluded as a legitimate form of research and means of constructing knowledge (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004). Theorists have instead endorsed a method of empirical inquiry that enforces the scientific method in the humanities and applied sciences. Empirical inquiry translated into aesthetic perception, assumes the existence of qualities of unity, balance, form, structure, nature, and mind that must be investigated using a problem-based approach in the scientific tradition. Inquiries into these concepts aim to uncover absolute knowledge by means of propositional thinking. By applying a post-Cartesian framework that develops hypotheses from propositions according to rules and syntax adapted from binary logic, logical relationships are formed according to identified criteria in order to meet necessary and sufficient conditions for developing validity assumptions. Logical arguments from various philosophical frameworks design and test hypotheses, and investigators analyze and demonstrate inferences according to the values and beliefs of their underlying research model. The development of knowledge and theory is, thus, tied to the uncovering of an *objective* reality of inherent properties, either through experiments that correlate or predict hypotheses or qualitatively through inductive analyses.

For those who object to this privileging of rational inquiry, the current scientific paradigm remains tied to dichotomies established in the eighteenth century. As such, it implicitly limits what may constitute knowledge to empirical observation and proposition described in oral/written language. It is a tradition that some commentators detect is subsumed in the current valorization of contemporary critical theory as the latest model of rational thought and an absolute hermeneutic:

Generally speaking, eighteenth-century philosophy became increasingly concerned with refining and restricting the forms and categories of rational thought that were closely identified with the province of discourse—that is, verbal language or writing—as the sole proprietor of meaning and communication. In the domain of aesthetics, which emerged parallel to Enlightenment rationalism, sticky problems were thus raised concerning the interpretation of the plastic arts. These problems tended to be resolved in two ways that persist today. One direction insists that to the extent that an image has a meaning, it must be echoed in a linguistic description. In this view, meaning is only possible as defined, expressed, or communicated through linguistic properties. Alongside this view develops an equally strong tradition in Western aesthetics that valorizes the image, either in its irreducibility to a sense or as its transcendence of the univocal and prosaic qualities of linguistic expression. In either case, word and image are still strictly defined in opposition to each other. (Rodowick, 2001, p. 31)

Underlying the binary opposition of word and image in Western aesthetics, there persists a Cartesian separation of senses and cognition. The division of object and subject is reflected in the division between body and mind. Its influence can be seen in the fixation on a philosophical materialism which understands concepts such as reality and mind as independent, self-contained objects. Reality, on this view, remains separated from its observer, whose role is to develop verifiable concepts, categorizations, associations, characteristics, qualities, and so on that describe and classify answers to hypotheses and questions. In art history, the disciplinary emphasis has promoted the seeking out of unambiguous facts, causalities, and proofs – signs of a persisting positivism in the field (Bal & Bryson, p. 174). Whereas exploring other understandings of reality is typically marginalized or classified under headings such as ‘mentally disturbed’ or ‘outsider art/ists’.

Despite the hegemony of scientific models in art education, indications over the past twenty-five years point towards the emergence of other modes of inquiry. New research paradigms adapted from the social sciences and other disciplines challenge the privileged status of the scientific observer. The accepted use of different methodological models extends the range of possible interpretive frameworks to other analytic standpoints. With new research demonstrating the inextricable link between thinking and emotions, (i.e. La Violette, Prigogine, Diamond, Grof & Bennett, Sternberg, etc.), there is a greater

understanding of brain processes, cognition, perception, and behavior and the complexity of their interactions. Such work reveals the inadequacy of models focused strictly on the individual's rational assessment within schooling's immediate environment.

In this vein, Gardner (1984) expanded ideas of visual intelligence by arguing that within any individual, multiple frames of perception and knowing operate as multiple intelligences. The idea of multiple intelligences is especially relevant for generations whose preferred interactivity is within the multi-dimensional landscape of digital media technologies where the forms and function of art transverse the 'proper' space of representation. The concept of 'proper perception', advanced by Arnheim (1969/1997), refers to an accepted way of seeing that is based on an individual's cognitive patterns, including his/her assumptions about what external, objective ('seen') reality may consist of and what would constitute an acceptable or unacceptable version of an experience. According to Cope and Kalantzis (2000), these ways of seeing will vary for an individual according to the various contexts and roles in which s/he exists. These critics, thus, present a new model of pluralistic, contextualized meaning-making or *multiliteracies*.

Any successful theory of pedagogy must be based on views about how the human mind works in society and classrooms, as well as about the nature of teaching and learning....Our view of mind, society and learning is based on the assumption that the human mind is embodied, situated, and social. That is, human knowledge is embedded in social, cultural and material contexts (p. 30).

Drawing on recent work in cognitive science, social cognition, and socio-cultural approaches to language and literacy, Cope and Kalantzis (2000) argue that knowledge or mastery of a practice comes not from scientific inquiry, but immersion in a community of learners engaged in authentic versions of that practice. As such, they suggest that the development of new knowledges occurs in the context of communal learning or "Situated Practice" (p.31). This is a critical finding for educators seeking to undo the false and damaging division of cognition from the senses. It opens the way for exploring the conditions that enable and support visual thinking, as knowledge and intelligence.

Nurturing Visual Intelligence with Semiosis

As previously cited, Gardner and Perkins demonstrate that visual thinking is one kind of intelligence by which individuals process information. According to Burnett (2004), "...images are an expression of various levels of intelligence— images are visualizations of thinking, feeling, seeing, and knowing." (p.77). He adds, "As more intelligence comes from unpredictable places (e.g. cars using GPS technology to know where they are), a web of interlocution, dialogue, and discourse is created to speed up the symbiotic links humans have to their machines and image-worlds. The boundaries between machine intelligence and human intelligence become 'sites' of movement and transgression." (Burnett, p. 166).

Our current model understands visual thinking as a prototype that continuously re-enacts and recreates reality (Currie & Ravenscroft, 2002). Sensory input, perception, representation, meaning, knowledge, information and even consciousness, operate not just psychologically and perceptually, but also socially and culturally. At the same time, factors like experience, expectations, psyche, and positioning affect the appearance of particular constructs. Despite the growing awareness of the complexity of visual intelligence, we hold on to the mistaken belief that our perceptions convey the truth about reality. As Bohm puts it:

... [We] confuse the forms and shapes induced in our perceptions by theoretical insight with a reality independent of our thought and our way of looking. This confusion is of crucial significance, since it leads us to approach nature, society, and the individual in terms of more or less fixed and limited forms of thought, and thus, apparently, to keep on confirming the limitation of these forms of thought in experience. (Bohm, pp. 6-7)

According to Cunningham and Shank (1992), mental structures arise from the mapping of objects, events, and entities in the world within our physical symbol system. Semiosis, by contrast, works like a rhizome – a mass of roots with no fixed points or positions, consisting only of connections (or relationships). A rhizome has no physical structures upon which meaning can be mapped. Applying the analogy, individuals who think

semiotically have limitless potential to construct personal structures. They can create connections outside the ones recognized as natural or given they can re-interpret the accepted meanings of social and cultural interactions and encode them with new perceptions and understandings. Semiosis, thus, moves beyond the dichotomies of the skill-based transmission model that current pedagogies are based on (Perkins, 1990). It provides a mode of inquiry that reflects the basically unlimited milieu in which we operate in the current age of technology, multimedia interactive environments, and disrupted disciplinary boundaries.

A Case for a Semiotic Pedagogy

If semiotics offers a broad platform for understanding the nature of meaning - the cognition, culture, behavior, and life itself, (Smith-Shank, 1995) then why do we not incorporate a semiotic pedagogy into our educational systems? Arguing strongly for the inclusion of just such a practice, Smith-Shank defines a semiotic pedagogy as a, "...purposeful nurturing of semiosis, nurturing a reasoning from sign to sign within an unlimited arena of signs" (Smith-Shank, p. 1).

As others have argued, semiosis, if it is to be purposeful, calls into conversation routinely unexamined cultural signs and explicitly confronts their arbitrary nature:

...[W]e are always dealing with systems of meaning operating within certain codes and conventions that are socially produced and historically conditioned. This is the postmodern focus that has replaced the modernist/romantic one of individual expression. (Hutchcon, 1989, p. 143 as cited by Neperud)

Bohm would call this conversation an intentional dialogue. For him, it is not just a matter of questioning a sign system's arbitrary nature, but of probing the interpretive framework and assumptions behind these signs. By doing so, we can work through the inexplicit and unexplored cultural myths that are commonly taken to be facts, truths, and other fixed variables and assumptions. Attending to these issues is both an individual and collective process. As Kockelman (2007) states, "... *joint attention* is a semiotic process" (p. 377) [Figure 21].

Smith-Shank outlines the goals of the collective inquiry at work in semiotic pedagogy:

Semiotic pedagogy is about expanding the boundaries of education. It is cooperative, active, experiential, and non-predictive in the sense that there are no limits to the amount or type of inquiry which might be necessary to bring a task to closure after spinning interpretants. (Smith-Shank, 1995, p. 1)



Figure 21: Zuzana Proksová and Tea Lindstrom discuss "My Prague in Colors". Tipton (2008).

A key aspect of this inquiry, according to Smith-Shank, is *engaging for the purpose of entering into new territory* – a process which just as crucially requires disengaging from the known. At its heart, such an endeavor is an attempt to make meaning – or think semiotically - through action within an unknown realm. Semiotic pedagogy, she writes, “is not a prescribed teaching method, but a way of acting within an *Umwelt* that accepts the semiotic nature of the learning process.” (1995, p. 2) Lemke points to a continual convergence of multiple semiotic systems:

Semiosis is the process of making meaning by deploying the resources of social systems of signs in a community. While linguistic signs (words, clauses, texts) form such a semiotic resource system, so do many nonlinguistic or only partly linguistic modes of human action. We can make meaning with dance, gesture, and movement; with pictures, diagrams, and typefaces; with songs, meals, and clothes. Most fundamentally, we make meaning with action. Linguistics made the first breakthroughs in the study of how we make meaning by deploying semiotic resources, but the general processes, it appears, apply to all meaning-making activity. (Lemke, 1994, p. 21)

Making meaning through action within the unknown is a process that Ligon (2003) calls “annotations.” The term refers to a project of the same name involving an online artwork consisting of an interactive family photo album. As part of this project, the user could construct a family photo album by making use of non-standard elements s/he selected. The project, (<http://www.diacenter.org>) created a site of invention (as cited by Walker, et. al 2006, pp. 316-17) within a dynamic environment of choices to be negotiated by the individual.

The concept of annotations extends Barthes’ (1987) model of connotations and denotations by adding creative, imaginative, and virtual elements to both of these

processes of interpretation. It also embodies “the figural”, a term used by Rodowick (2001) to describe the space of interaction between an art object and the viewer. In this particular case, the figural space was an ongoing artwork constructed through the individual’s choices about changing its elements. The artwork – continually re-generated by intertextual annotations - both operated through and revealed the viewer’s subjectivity. Making artistic choices required creativity and discipline and yet was accomplished without the use of force or coercion. In fact, the motivation to interpret and act on the visual discourse came from the dynamism and generative force of art’s own materialization process the individual enacts.

The Power of Semiosis: New Directions for Educators

Bohm provides a starting point for developing a type of self-awareness among learners that can lead to meaningful change in our socio-cultural constructs. By cultivating meta-cognitive skills, he argues, we help students and educators alike to notice and explore the structure of their own and others’ thinking and then contest its underlying assumptions. This process can cause them, in turn, to reflect on the neurosemiotic processes by which representations and all experiences are continuously endowed with meaning. As Derrida (1987) has posited, meaning is an event – part of a chain of meaning that reveals itself and unfolds, changes, and transforms, like the creative process itself.

Reflecting on our individual and collective neurosemiotic processes is particularly important, Favareau (2002) argues, since it highlights the inherently subjective and yet ever changing nature of constructed experience. Taking this insight further, his work holds that the novelty of each person’s neurosemiosis defies its categorization under standardized ‘objective’ criteria. This has profound implications for educators since it suggests that our systems of education (and indeed, our larger societies) are built upon mistaken assumptions whose very nature inhibits individuals from learning. To support the inherent individuality of personal experience and expression, educators may need to ask if schools can really afford to adhere to a culturally transmitted set of standardized outcomes into which all students must conform or fit. The move away from the

transmission system would open up a space for a transformative educational model – and specifically, one that tailors student outcomes to their own learning and knowing processes, fusing student intention, focus, and experience with other facilitating factors. For if...“the power of Semiotics lies in encoding not decoding...” (H.G. Taylor, personal communication, March 17, 2003), then the opportunity for students to create new meaning and interpretation, makes possible re-inventing their relationships to socio-cultural forms of interaction, not only to intervisualities.

If, as Bohm and Favareau suggest, semiosis is the framework for questioning and challenging how perceptions, cognitions, and context structure individual experiences of visualities, then dialogic inquiry as a method, supports the pedagogical application of its process. Applied together with meta-level thinking, Bohm’s version of dialogue serves as a vehicle to challenge the unacknowledged assumptions embedded in ‘subjective’ enunciations. Using semiosis as a tool to critically analyze and interpret visual culture, educators can move beyond the current focus on what visual culture *is* and begin to examine how visual culture is experienced. Reflecting on how the structures and operational process transforms linguistic, symbolic, or material representation opens up new spaces for personal and cultural creativity.

Bohm and Favareau’s contributions to an awareness of the antecedents and conditioning behind thinking, support the understanding that representations and signs have their origins within a certain neurobiology. Their research and theories give us guidance for understanding that people are part of a,

...living, interactive, massively re-entrant, semiotic *web*, the history of whose organization incorporates its past, is active in the present and extends outwards to the future – “a web of experience woven out of signs and used to catch various objects in our *Umwelt* for the sake of our survival and flourishing. (Colapietro, 1993, cited by Favareau, 2002, p. 6)

CHAPTER 3: PEDAGOGICAL METHODS AND CONSIDERATIONS

“The postmodern, semiotic, constructivist view talks about meaning, not about truth. It talks about how discourses define phenomena, not about how phenomena are described by discourses.”

- Jay Lemke, (1994, p. 28)

The predominant pedagogical approach in arts education today emphasizes domain knowledge (Perkins, 1994) as the definitive structure of meaning. While this paradigm has brought certain knowledge into widespread use, its practice tends to short circuit the authority of the student's own voice, leading him or her to doubt the legitimacy of his/her interpretive capacities. Art educators may use postmodern thinking in treating the visual field and environmental context as source material for the experience, critique, and making of art. Nevertheless, they have yet to fully address the related attitudinal and structural changes needed from schools and the curriculum to enhance their interactivity. In this regard, constructivist learning, which reflects the open-ended neural structure of the brain, offers an important alternative approach that would encourage and enhance the dynamic interaction between the environment and the individual. As observers note, the attraction of this approach lies largely in its commitment to collaborative knowledge-building:

The most promising new developments in education involve restructuring school activities and discourse so that they resemble in some fashion the workings of research groups—where real questions are being investigated and students are trying to contribute to progress on those questions (Bereiter, 1999, p. 20).

Within a collaborative education process, students participate as co-creators in the design and application of learning. As may be imagined, this method poses a radical challenge and threat to traditional pedagogy that only recognizes the value of certain prescribed kinds of learning and knowledge.

Moving Beyond Traditional Knowledge Models

Since their inception, Western systems of philosophy have been dominated by totalizing models whose categories are said to form the basis of all knowledge. It was on this basis, for example that Kant (1987) famously pointed to his knowledge of the phenomenon of experience as the perceptual framework within which all individual experiences of the world are constructed. These systems typically encounter problems whenever they meet with any alternative modes of thinking, or are asked to imagine alternative ways of perceiving and being. Western epistemology thus, struggles in the face of many indigenous systems of *knowing* which operate according to different time-space-matter constructions. Systems based on linear duality cannot conceptualize that as new physics posits, light has no duality and doesn't need a vehicle to take form to travel. To experience how time, space and matter exist within consciousness, and not the other way around, is difficult when the operating paradigm denies its possibility. Such 'Implicate Order' dimensions may not even appear as categorical constructs in the Western academic system of learning, knowing, and apprehending.

By looking beyond the strict logical limits of the traditional Western model, we encounter a multitude of other means of communicating, knowing, and experiencing that otherwise could not be conceptualized. Within a council structure of governance, as originally used by the indigenous Iroquois people, for example, a question may itself be more important than the answer it seeks to bring into existence. Such answers may not entail the use of words. The question opens a relational dialogue involving the person asking and his/her capacity to listen to what returns and sit within its echo-location – a realm where eye, light, and object are not distinguished. Perception, in this sense, is experienced quite differently to its strict definition in Western philosophical models.

The gap between an ocularcentric model of perception and cognition and indigenous ways of knowing cannot be explained by reason and logic alone. But these other systems of knowing are paradigms that exist alongside logical Western models where the dominance of visual acuity excludes other factors that may impinge upon interpretation.

Grof & Bennett (1993) points to another key conceptual limit of Western metaphysics when he suggests, "...the assumption that consciousness is a by-product of material processes occurring in the brain has become one of the most important metaphysical tenets of the Western worldview." (p. 5). Modern physicists, he writes, seek to move outside this restricted worldview by pursuing a mode of inquiry that takes the substance of perception beyond the neurophysiology of the brain. In doing so, they introduce ideas of the holographic realm of the 'unified field'.

Instead of there being discrete objects and empty spaces between them the entire universe is seen as one continuous field of varying density. In modern physics matter becomes interchangeable with energy. Within this new worldview, consciousness is seen as an integral part of the universal fabric, certainly not limited to the activities contained inside our skulls. (Grof & Bennett, p. 7)

Reflecting on the dangers of operating within a limited system or worldview, Arnheim (1969) comments: "A perceiver and thinker whose concepts are limited to the kind foreseen by traditional logic is in danger of performing in a world of paralyzed constructs." (p. 46). Unfreezing paralyzed constructs, Grof & Bennett (1993) suggest, depends on the use of our inherent ability based on creative intelligence and its interactivity. The intentional nurturing of this interactive dynamic has profound implications for all previously held beliefs about the nature of matter, human beings, intelligence, perception, and the entire nature of human existence.

Insights through Situated Practice

The theory of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) proposes a complex interrelationship between concrete and abstract knowing as distinct but inseparable modes of knowing (Baker, Jensen & Kolb, 2002, p. 8).

Simple perception of experience alone is not sufficient for learning; something must be done with it. Similarly, transformation alone cannot represent learning, for there must be something to be transformed, some state or experience that is being acted upon (Kolb, 1984, p. 42).

Conversational learning is an experiential learning process (Baker, Jensen, & Kolb, 2002). "Learners move through the cycle of experiencing, reflecting, abstracting and acting as they construct meaning from their experiences in conversations" (p. 4). As the

authors continue:

...conversation is a meaning making process whereby understanding is achieved through interplay of opposites and contradictions. Traditionally dialectics have been viewed as a linguistic process that leads to generation of new ideas and concepts by one's awareness of a tension and paradox between two or more opposites. It involves stating a point of view and questioning it from other points of view, eventually seeking consensual agreement which in turn is ultimately questioned from still other perspectives...Dialectical inquiry aspires to holism through the embracing of differences and contradictions....An inviting attitude about differences in opinion and perception is key to the process. (p. 5)

The aspirations mapped out here demand a difficult educational shift. In particular, they require the accommodation of differences, whether by including students' viewpoints in the curriculum or allowing for the possibility of other kinds of *knowingness* displaced by the ruling discourse of rational empiricism, to allow for individual differences to be accommodated. Gardner (1990) displays a telling bias in his comments on the limits of individual difference:

...human beings evince certain strong inclinations and biases, even as they experience special difficulties in mastering certain forms of information at particular developmental points. These inclinations and obstacles are thrown into sharp relief when individuals are reared in schooled environments where they are expected to master certain bodies of knowledge within limited periods of time.

It is against such background information that policies in art education ought to be framed. (p.11)

The individual's inclinations and obstacles appear in tension with the system's expectation of performance mastery in Gardner's summary. Against his concerns and sanctions, it is, however, worth asking what would happen if the systemic expectation shifted from task mastery to the student's own choices, intentions, and purposes. By reconceptualizing the teaching and learning process as a holonomic one in the sense described by Grof & Bennett (1993), it is possible to *trust* the unfolding of the individual learning process instead of approaching it with doubt and suspicion of its flaws. This is clearly a challenging move within a public education system that uses fear to justify mass schooling and dedicates its resources to the teaching of domain content according to institutionalized and legislated designs. As we have seen, this system seldom encourages students to design, learn and grow within their own terms. Crucially, however, artmaking

offers a potential exception to this trend, and thus, it may be a key site for educational change

Teaching and Learning through Construction

Constructivism is no longer a new paradigm in education, but it is one that has not been fully utilized. Whether attributed to Bruner, Piaget, cognitive scientists, or seventeenth-century apprenticeship guilds, constructivism gives new impetus to educational reform efforts. While the call to “reconstruct” classroom interactions for more purposeful learning is coming from many sectors, it is not always clear who benefits from such efforts. John Dewey’s early work in education provided formative tenets for constructivism (Doll, 1999). Dewey believed that students, “...forge new experiences from existing experiences” (Dewey, 1963/1938). Constructivism maintains that students make connections with their prior experiences in order to develop personal meaning from life events. Constructivist learning is an intensely individual process. Each individual structures his/her knowledge of the world into a unique pattern, connecting each new fact, experience, or understanding into meaningful relationships to the wider world (Wilson & Davis, 1994).

This finding supports the postmodernist perspective that social contexts cannot be separated or removed from discussions about learning. Learning happens within a non-linear but interconnected web of relationships and meaning, which are bound together. Learning therefore cannot be predetermined and fixed in the definitive ways in which our institutionalized schools have standardized assessment practices for measuring the achievement of student learning outcomes according to subject and grade-specific scope and sequences.

As an educational practice, constructivism has come to symbolize more of a method than a way of thinking about the process and purpose of education. Its underlying premises are antithetical to current operating practices in the majority of schools worldwide. It proposes redefining the classic teacher-student paradigm for learning into a model

emphasizing student-centered and student-initiated content. Its success also relies on the incorporation of reflective thinking as part of the classroom learning environment. It is necessary for students to engage in the process of meta-level thinking for the brain to transform the connections and patterns it experiences into cognitive structures (Solso, 1993).

In this manner, individuals *construct* the instructional process instead of having teacher-directed activities predetermine the content and intention of learning. Bereiter (1999) argues that such knowledge-building behaviors are necessary for the future success of students operating in a new knowledge age. In order for constructivism to emerge, learning is viewed less as knowledge acquisition than a process of entering into knowledge-forming relationships. In this paradigm, the teacher must suspend belief in the value of his/her own authority and engage in a process of inquiry with students which facilitates their own interests and learning patterns (Doll, 1993).

A constructivist emphasis in curriculum shifts the teacher's role from conveyor of knowledge in a passive format to that of an active facilitator of learning from a student-centered point of view. Students determine the direction and form of the learning process, "constructing" meaning from the content as they go. Schools and professionals involved in alternative education will not find anything new in these directives. Yet, the implication for most state or public schools is profound. Abbott and Ryan (1999) add that a constructivist approach requires that the community outside the school play a greater role in student learning. They call upon restructuring efforts to direct more resources to younger learners and to extend the concept of learning community beyond the classroom.

If knowledge is generative instead of fixed, then this idea has enormous implications for education. It means that knowledge within any field is not static and cannot be solely conveyed by facts. If new knowledge is continually being constructed by individuals, then new knowledge systems are also being created, a conclusion that would seem to find support from the current growth in 'knowledge-based' businesses. The challenge for education is to design instructional and pedagogical systems that reflect the natural

process of learning so that students are not just prepared for but are engaged fully in the world in which they are working and living. What is needed is a new paradigm that imbues these goals, or what Deliss (1992) calls a blueprint for a visual methodology.

Using the concepts and language of constructivism to describe this new paradigm, we might say that it will shape shift according to the perspectives brought to it. As Deliss argues, the modern aesthetic paradigm based on binary oppositions (primitive/modern, western/non-western, etc.) is no longer adequate to describe today's hypertextual environment or the shift in quantum physics from dichotomies to simultaneous non-local paradigms. Educators in this environment are challenged to develop non-linear instructional practices that meet the non-linear learning propensities of today's students and environment.

Constructivism as New Pedagogy

Utilizing the open-ended approach of constructivism, Tochon (1990) approaches the junction between creative, motivational elements within the learning milieu and the elements the individual brings to them, in order to intentionally use their interactivity in novel ways. While classical didactics in education develops cognitive goals in order to master the conceptual aspects of course content, Tochon's perspective works from a post-constructivist and postmodern perspective according to which every methodology is ideological. He advocates a process he calls 'didaction' to create actions of the individual that express their own personal voice, with no further process of appraisal than satisfying their own communicative goal (Tochon, p. 45). While few other scholars have taken up the call for the transformation of didactics as Tochon describes it, his conceptual paradigm challenges current thinking and practices in visual arts education.

As early as the 1920s, Alexandre Vesnin wrote about the way in which some objects create an organizing effect on awareness and others do not (Khan-Magomedoy, 1986), thus setting the stage for an early conceptualization of the motivating principles within our environment. Interestingly, current educational practices remain largely unaware of

these findings. Taking student-centered learning and removing it from criterion-referenced outcomes, as Tochon proposes, is clearly a revolutionary way of thinking about education, especially in a climate where standardized testing is increasingly linked to models of student success, and hence, central to school funding.

Teaching experiences tend to separate knowing and doing instead of understanding how these two process jointly structure cognition in learning situations (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989). As an alternative, several commentators have looked at the value of situated or “authentic” learning experiences [in the arts] where these experiences are defined as those which resemble “real life” practices and encourage learners to engage in the processes of artistic practitioners (Meban, 2002). The value of these situated “doing” experiences is supported by research demonstrating that when learners are provided with authentic learning situations, meaningful learning occurs (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989). By providing learners with opportunities to access practitioner knowledge and skills, students gain an understanding of the elements that shape artistic practices. Experiencing the work of a practicing artist helps students understand how artistic practice is actualized within the cultural context of a contemporary artistic community (Meban, 2002).

A constructivist approach to curriculum and pedagogy (Tipton, 2002; Tipton, 2007), supports the role of situated practice and the authority of student voice. As Steet (2006) cautions, situated practice can be thwarted when it is implemented without its theoretical counterpart. But used together with practice within a context of critical inquiry, theory becomes one part of an overall learning *cycle* from which new knowledge is constructed. Therefore, it is useful to consider the methodological architecture for developing new knowledge and also incorporate Kolb’s (1984) learning styles theory (LST) intentionally in pedagogical design and practice. LST supports the use of information about individual learning styles, such as this self-description by an undergraduate student from France:

I think, act and judge with my feelings. Maybe it's because I trust in them? And after, I think with my mind. I always wonder what I am doing, I try to see myself with an outsider point of view, and judge by myself. I try to guess how the other interlocutors receive my behavior, my words... (HU5, P2: Tanret, 2007)

Learning styles theory fosters individual development through a cycle of various phases of knowing that begins differently for each person, depending on whether his/her learning style initially connects with action, observation, experimentation or abstract conceptualization as part of the experiential learning. In this way, the teacher guides and supports the unfolding of situated practice according to the capacity and interests of the learners, and the theory remains grounded inside experience.

Lessons from the History of Semiosis

Semiosis, or sign theory, grew out of an empirical linguistic tradition that initially considered the dynamic way in which signs function.

This process involves the production and the interpretation of signs, both equally fundamental. Hence this theory provides a logical basis for a reader- or reception-oriented theory of art.” (Bal & Bryson, 1991, p. 188)

The theory conceived of an interaction between a sign or symbol that stands for something else (representamen); the thing for which the sign stands (referent); and the mental image or abstraction (interpretant) that the recipient of the sign or symbol forms. It is important to distinguish that the interpretant refers not to the recipient of the sign themselves, but to the impression of the sign compiled from the connotations and denotations of its qualities.

While the triadic relationship between signs, symbols, and ascribed meaning has its roots in the work of nineteenth-century logician Charles S. Peirce, semiotics today recognizes that sensory cues as well as words, pictures, or bodily movements can serve as signs for objects which may have no basis in the ‘real’ world (Smith-Shank, 1995, p. 2). For Peirce, the icon is a type of a sign does not need an object to exist; the index is a sign that loses its character as a sign if its object is removed; and a symbol is a sign which loses the character making it a sign if there is no interpretant (cited by Bal & Bryson, 1991, pp. 189-191). An illustration of an icon as one kind of sign without an object can be found in Bohm’s (1994) example of “rainbow”, which objectifies the process of rain refracting

light. Bohm does not differentiate between signs and symbols per se as Peirce does, illustrating how these distinctions are particular to the system using them.

In a persistent attitude towards images, icons have been mistakenly judged on the degree of 'realism' of the image as a direct representation of 'reality'. "The iconic is a quality of the sign in relation to its object; it is best seen as a sign capable of evoking nonexistent objects because it proposes to imagine an object similar to the sign itself" (Bal & Bryson, 1991, p. 190). Bal & Bryson (1991) elaborate that "...the decision to suppose that the image refers to something on the basis of likeness is the iconic act, and a sense of specularity is its result" (Bal & Bryson, 1991, p. 190). But as a matter of distinction, the icon and index are symmetrically opposed to each other.

...the index functions in very different cases, and the most plausible once is not necessarily the most reliable one. The signature of the artist, for example, is an index of the person of the maker, even if it is a false signature; that is precisely why it is a sign, a stand-in for an absent other. From the perspective of the sender, a false signature is an icon (of the real signature) parading as an index. This possibility of falsification of the most materially grounded of the three signs is fundamental. As Eco has written with his characteristic philosophical insight parading as a joke, the sign can be defined as everything that can be used in order to lie [A Theory of Semiotics 64, 10]. (p. 190)

The above examples illustrate some of the consequences when meaning is presumed to be embedded within the image itself. Goodman (1976) and Bohm (1994) each point to the dangers of confusion and incoherence when the system of codification and its terms are not clearly understood or agreed upon.

Saussure's influence on semiotics came from his application of linguistics in an attempt to posit a science of signs. Saussure remodeled the Peircian language into the terms *signifier*, *signified*, and *referent* whose relations were conceived as more internal to the sign itself as part of a whole system of language. The ensuing structuralist position looked for a system to depict how these relations were situated at the particular moment in time in which they were examined, and not in an historical context. This thesis separated language (*langue*) from speech (*parole*) (Chandler, 2002). As such, Saussure divided the system and structure of a language (or *code*) from its message. "Structuralist

cultural theorists subsequently adopted this Saussurean priority, focusing on the functions of social and cultural phenomena within semiotic systems” (Chandler, 2002, pp. 12-13).

Barthes (1977) extended Saussure’s systematic language study to any system of signs, establishing the concept of object-signs formed from images or events. He contributed the use of connotation as a tool for reading literal sign associations, and the use of denotation for referring to the ideas or concepts attached to them.

Criticism of Saussure focused on his synchronic approach that treated the system of language as if it were a snapshot in time, instead of examining the *langue’s* evolution *through* time together with its *parole*. This led to the reversal Saussure’s position, and the introduction of a new semiotics which examined the meaning of a sign within the social context of its use. Bakhtin’s former student, Kristeva brought his ideas on intertextuality to a greater audience. At the same time, Kristeva (1986) fractured his model, placing the semiotic within an understanding of a psychosomatic modality. Kristeva theorized that drive processes and their articulations are distinct from the realm of signification that is always concerned with positions, i.e. propositions and judgment. On the other hand, psychodynamics operates within other systems and codes than those of linguistic signification.

Derrida (1987) supported the idea that semiosis is a process, arguing that it can never be enclosed as the conjunction of the signifier and signified since it is the *motion* between these two concepts. Nevertheless, he observed that in order to speak about visual signification, a boundary, which creates the object of aesthetics, is necessary. It was in voicing his opposition to this boundary that he articulated his ideas on paragon (Derrida, 1987). Kristeva and Derrida were each influential in disputing the assumption that the meanings given to signs operating with a set of rules are fixed, and not assigned and interpreted by those using them.

Culler (1988) proposed the idea that the use of signs is framed or determined by various discursive practices, values, institutional settings, and semiotic mechanisms. Thus, the

frame, as the sign's context, is an artifice for the purpose of articulations. Visual semiosis becomes, then, a matter of *de*-framing (Derrida, 1987).

...as soon as the idea of a delimiting frame is questioned and the possibility of dynamic semiosis is admitted, the relation of opposition must give way to that of nonoppositional difference. The image becomes what it is by being traversed by flows of signification that cut across the boundary, making the image part of a general circulation of signs and codes within the social formation as a whole. (Bal & Byson, 1991, p. 193)

Goodman (1979) related the linguistic idea of systemic structures to non-linguistic symbol systems, introducing the view that non-linguistic symbols follow their own rules of codification according to the design of their systems and rules of classification. Not only connotations and denotations, but exemplifications become necessary tools for negotiating ascribed meanings to these codes with others. Exemplification, according to Goodman (1976), is not limited to appearances but includes metaphorical associations not bound to the schemes that form the codification system. This process is based on codification, not solely description. Goodman extends the idea of 'reference' to comprise both denotation and exemplification (i.e. – x denotes y and y complies with the label that denotes it – to be within a certain compliance-class.) Symbols and labels are determined by rules of correlation to what characteristics have been identified that an entity possesses. Goodman elaborates:

A picture must denote a man to represent him, but need not denote anything to be a man-representation. Incidentally, the copy theory of representation takes a further beating here; for where a representation does not represent anything there can be no question of resemblance to what it represents. (p. 25)

Beliefs and expectations also supply systems of categories or kinds that structure what is perceived (Goodman and Elgin, 1988). The creative act also simultaneously alters some of the reflexes from patterns of codification, and also produces its expression, whether verbal or not, as the action of an insight (Bohm, 1994, p. 150). Thus, standards of 'correctness' depend on what a system has been designed to do and how it changes.

Bohm (1994) asks how the cycle of conditioned thought patterns and projected forms can be broken. While it may not be possible to stop our representations from having an effect on thinking, it is possible to develop an awareness of the process of what is happening

inside thoughts in order to change it. While Bohm recommends suspending judgment to observe impressions first before trying to do anything with what has been observed, he conjectures that an unconditional field of energy is available in us to do just this and see what appears.

Sites of Contemporary Practice

Including voices of contemporary artists speaking about art theory in relation to their own work is another way to bridge the 'theory to practice' divide in arts education. As the Italian painter Francesco Clemente has said of his art:

An object is a fragment of a more complicated discourse. There are other fragments and one story or another can be images from these fragments, but basically it is not important which one it is." (Guggenheim, 1999, p. 21)

In order to create new experiences of space, body, affect, consciousness, sexuality, and relationships, Clemente also plays with the fragmentation of experience through his paintings and drawings. Explicating the meaning of these pieces, art critic and curator, Francesco Pellizzo (1999) writes:

What the painter might seek, and what the viewer should find, is not a sense (*aisthesis*) of liberation, but the transmodern sense of a shifting place of origin; every step, every station, is the first and last in this vortex, a maelstrom animated by an eros that is enveloping and inevitable but also, in the end, joyous, soft, and welcoming. (p.335)

When Pellizzi writes about Clemente, he provides his own authoritative directive about what the viewer *should find*. Whereas Clemente uses a process of arbitrary choices, cultivating randomness, to create a field of meaning where "...seemingly meaningless imagistic elements rub against one another to spark a flame of indeterminate meaning." (Pellizzi, p. 24-5), the interpretation of artworks has been given for the viewer by the curatorial position. Applying these discourses in relation to the work itself, thus, involves a commingling of interests and worlds.

As *cultural interventionists*, artists may use their bodies - what Lindhartová calls, 'wetware' (HUI, P2: Lindhartová, 2006) - and their practices to perform direct socio-cultural and political critique. In doing so, sometimes artists put themselves at risk of all

kinds of counter-attacks, such as occurred in the case of the Critical Art Ensemble (CAE) members, who were indicted in 2004 in the United States for bioterrorism and fraud, and investigated for murder (p. 129). The (false) indictment against their lead member resulted in the loss of grant funding and international exhibition placement, and it culminated in one of the members of the ensemble being detained by the FBI on federal charges for the performance art piece *Free Range Grain*. The piece used commonly available biology equipment to 'perform' molecular biology techniques that tested for genetically modified food, thus exposing the system of genetically-modified food traded in the global food market (Critical Art Ensemble, 2004). The piece exposed the role of the world's largest multinational corporation Monsanto in this 'contamination'. CAE asks and responds to the question of why this happened in the piece *When Thought Becomes Crime*:

The first reason, we believe, involves the discourse in which we framed our project. By viewing the scientific process through the lens of political economy, we disrupted the legitimized version of science as a self-contained, value-free specialization. The powers that be would have science speak for, within, and about itself. This insularity is akin to Clement Greenberg's idea of letting art history explain the production of art, or Emile Durkheim's use of 'social facts' to explain the social. But any discourse exists within larger historical and political contexts. It seemed self-evident for us to place competing discourses in conversation, and show the socioeconomic ideologies at work in food production. From the perspective of authority, however, we were being subversive, deviant (pp. 129-30).

The artists performing works of this kind risk not only censorship or jail for their 'freedom of speech' actions, but also potentially their lives, as the UNESCO World Conference on Arts Education (2006) revealed. This conference documented over 100,000 artists who have been murdered for social and political reasons. In exploring work by the artists behind practices such as Pippa Bacca (<http://bridesontour.fotoup.net>) or engaging in dialogue about events like the inflammatory murder of controversial filmmaker Theo van Gogh in Holland (2004), educators can enact a *living* critical pedagogy.

Another important form of critique for contemporary artists comes from their participation in works of anti-theory – that is, pieces which parody ubiquitous practices within the academy. These subversive imitations respond especially to the ease with

which academic professionals absorb the latest cultural and critical standpoints; the latter are popularized so instantly that they have the quality of fast food – cheap, quick, familiar, and marketable. As an example, the work of artist Kelly Walker (http://www.saatchi-gallery.co.uk/artists/kelley_walker.htm), a self-identified ‘neo-appropriationist’ marks a powerful anti-theoretical intervention in this mode. Responding to the critical adoption and ownership of all aspects of culture, she highlights the dilemmas of artists in the so-called underground, cyberpunk, experimental, alternative or neo-avant-garde scenes, whose work is systematically excluded from the mainstream contemporary art world and must be discovered elsewhere. These individuals are drawn into the center of the academic or contemporary art markets as their work is theorized, or they suddenly become its new stars. This encounter, she suggests, is one of confrontation, collusion, and controversy.

Responding to trends in the critical reception to contemporary art in the mid-1990s, Stallabrass notes:

Academic writing has tended to be caught up in the continued dominance of deconstruction, old Freudian and Lacanian models (widely discredited in other fields), and identity-based accounts....The particular advantage of dominant deconstructive and psychoanalytical accounts is that they can be arbitrarily applied to the most unlikely of works with predictably ‘critical’ results: traumatic voids have even recently been discovered in the glib, slick surfaces of pieces by Sam Taylor-Wood. Once the method is learned, any material can be fed into the machine. (Stallabrass, 2004/2006, p. 18)

Kristeva supports Stallabrass’s interpretation and adds her own:

Academic discourse, and perhaps American university discourse in particular, possesses an extraordinary ability to absorb, digest and neutralize all of the key, radical or dramatic moments of thought, particularly a fortiori, of contemporary thought. (Kristeva, 1986, p. 303)

In another kind of appropriation, the academic discourse which Kristeva refers to comes from one of the four sources that Lacan (1969/1970), cited by Kristeva, p. 124) identified: the hysteric, the academic, the master, and the analyst Kristeva (1986) herself adapted these categories into four signifying practices: narrative, meta-language, contemplation, and text-practice, (p. 122) so as to specify various modes of “signifying

dispositions” (p. 123). Taking the critical impulse further, academics reflecting on their own professional practice would do well to consider the original and now lost meaning of the term ‘academia’, which can be traced to the influence of Plato’s companion and mentor Academius after the murder of Socrates. The word ‘academia’ was intended to memorialize the learning practice that he and Plato developed in eliciting information from each other while walking together (Zayat, personal communication October 14, 2008). Ironically, academia and schooling in general have taken on the opposite in an altogether different turn, focusing *not* on fulfilling individualized learning processes. Part of the critique of academic writing, then, involves determining how to resuscitate and occupy a forgotten and unknown place inside the realm of institutionalized thinking where people walk together and elicit from each other the information they create value from.

On the surface of this attempt is the process of critical discourse analysis. According to Gee (2003), critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a tool to assist in identifying kinds of discourses and how they operate. Comparing accounts about contemporary art from the point of view of critics and/or artists with academic writing, or images of contemporary artists with those of advertising, is a way that educators can work creatively instead of reactively, with the tension Stallabrass’ text reveals. Tension is intentionally brought back into the academic realm for critical examination but does not stop there. For this purpose, creative explorations through artmaking are an essential part of the student’s own critical discourse analysis. Whereas auto/biography can function as literature, anthropology, or art, using cultural and academic texts together in new con/texts opens up a space for multiliteracies to be contemplated, contested, reconstituted, and resignified.

A Critical Semiotics

A critical semiotics takes up the challenge to identify complex sign systems that frame our thinking - and then *reframes* them. It is a challenge that, as Bal & Bryson note, that requires attention from the inquirer’s own rhetorical and institutional placement:

Semiotics assumes that not only artworks but the accounts we fashion for them are works of the sign; it especially attends to the governing tropes of art-historical rhetoric (where 'rhetoric' does not, of course, imply 'ornament' or 'embellishment,' but names the fundamental conceptual shapes of art-historical accounts)...when we confront works of art, we enter the field of the sign and of semiosis, of potentially infinite regressions and expansions, and that we deal with this situation by delimiting it from the place where we stand 'now' (p. 184).

This description of critical semiotics speaks to many of the objections that have come from postmodernist thinkers, including comments by Freedman (1997) on semiotics' role as a kind of reworked structuralism. Freedman argues that semiotic approaches are an illegitimate attempt to force images to fit into a narrow visual meaning derived from structuralism (p. 7). Against this, she advocates for a broader view of interpretation allowing for the presence of multiple meanings. This critique seems to be more directed at early interpretation-centered approaches which were based on structuralism and hermeneutics. It might be applied, for example, to the discipline-based arts education paradigm which doesn't intentionally teach the use of semiotics in either arts education methodology or its curriculum, opting instead for the four-part aesthetic evaluation model developed by Feldman (1967). The Feldman model, which was meant to ensure "intelligent looking" selected artworks, set out separate stages of description, analysis, interpretation, and judgment which viewers should follow to critique works of art (Feldman, 2003). Its prescriptions included using a descriptive narrative writing style to create a 'picture' of evaluated work, and its application was limited to the codes and signs considered within its particular framework.

A critical semiotics moves away from the structuralist and hermeneutic frameworks which early critics imported from literary criticism, often applying methods of literary analysis wholesale to visual texts (Darley, 2000, p. 5). Unlike these models, it does not simply interpret sign and coding systems according to the viewer's particular aesthetic framework. Rather, it considers signs within a set of relationships that are constructed to reveal how meaning-making and coding processes are formed and operate in various milieus. It is guided here by post-structuralism, which focuses on the socially constructed nature of the sign, holding that that a sign does not correspond with a single univocal signified, as had been suggested by Saussurean structuralism. Contemporary artist Juan

Sanchez takes this idea further:

First of all, when we deal with text, with words, we are dealing with markings as opposed to different sign languages or messages. We have a tendency to develop a blind spot to the idea that these letters are marks. These marks have a certain degree of density. They have an incredibly wide range of effect, in the same way that marks used to create an image of a shape or form have. (Harper, 1998, p. 83)

Endo's *TypeTrace* was also using the idea of text as psychical marking, not just physical ones. The wide impact of 'marking' systems outside of linguistics is reinforced in semiotics' engagement with psychoanalysis. Bal and Bryson (1991) highlight the relationship between psychoanalytic readings and visual representations:

Psychoanalysis is a mode of reading the unconscious and its relationship to expression, and as such it is a semiotic theory. Using this theory for the study of visual art assumes that art bears traces of the unconscious. Moreover, many of the key concepts of psychoanalytic theory have a specific visual status (the imaginary, the gaze), or refer to visual experiences (castration anxiety, the mirror stage), to sign-making (condensation, displacement), or to concepts we tend to visualize. (the breast, the phallus). (p. 195)

In mapping out concepts such as the *chora*, a mode of signification in which the linguistic sign is not yet articulated (Kristeva, 1986, p. 94), Kristeva points to the place of unconscious processes in representation. This insight demonstrates the limits of phenomenology, suggesting a kind of sublimation process that renders pre-symbolic orders inaccessible and unknowable through logical or linguistic systems. Kristeva (1986) articulates the syntactic and grammatical relationship between conscious and unconscious processes as a series of operations and transgressions between semiotic and symbolic orders. As well as the unconscious processes of displacement and condensation named by Freud and introduced by Kruszewski & Jackobsen (cited by Kristeva, 1986) as metonymy and metaphor, she includes a third "...the passage from one sign-system to another" (p. 111), which comes about as a combination of the other processes. This leads to a new signifying system that "may be produced with the same signifying material" (p. 111), or in other words, by intertextuality. In this process, *transposition* plays an essential role in moving and articulating the new system and its representability (p. 112). In the psychoanalytic process, talking- and all that it reveals - reflects articulated movement across interpretant, signifier and signified. A similar movement takes place in dialogic

inquiry where meaning is discovered as it unfolds and emerges from individual and collective insight. Maturana & Varela (1987) (cited by Baker, Jensen, & Kolb., 2002), describe this as the autopoietic (self-making) process of a living system.

Autopoiesis refers to a mechanism whereby a living organism whether physical, mental, or social becomes a self-organized, autonomous system by specifying its laws and determining what is proper to its existence. An autopoietic system is organized as a network of processes with two primary tasks at hand: to regenerate and realize the network of processes that enables its existence through their continuous interactions and transformations, and to specify the boundary of its realization as a concrete unity in the space they exist. It is important to notice that these are not separate sequential processes, but two different dimensions of the same phenomenon. (Baker, Jensen & Kolb, 2002, p. 6)

Similarly, Poulsen (2007) describes how the conversational learning and reflection generated an autopoietic learning experience from them:

It is almost a repetition – the reflective writing was very helpful to me. It made the course more connected in a way that we always had something to turn back to, that we already had been discussing. (HU5, P22: Poulsen, 2007)

The complexity of semiotic experiences exposes the limits of the models of theorists like Mirtzoeff (1998) who simply divided the sign into halves, i.e. the signifier and the signified (p. 13) and truncated the semiotic dialogue. In doing so, the role of the interpretant collapsed onto the signified as if the interpretant was an inherent and not a contingent relationship. Mirtzoeff's division reduces the two sign variables to a causal link that is more relevant to Peirce (1960)'s idea of 'secondness' of a sign being explored normatively. 'Thirdness', on the other hand, is missing here since, as Sanchez comments about letters as marks previous stated. Thirdness in contemporary semiotics plots the circulation between signs, meaning, and representations in an open system where signifier, signified, and interpretant can all take each other's roles at any particular interpretive moment (Chandler, 2002). This movement is not constrained by the cause (mark) and effect (letter) interpretation that equates reading and seeing. Instead, interpretation of signs occurs dynamically on an individual and collective basis with connections that are simultaneously linear and cyclical. It is a recursive motion by which individuals may return to earlier ideas and concepts, inquire about their experience, and encounter new meanings (Baker, Jensen, & Kolb, p. 10).

Turning to the question of how students and teachers of art may become aware of this complex semiotic process, it is helpful to draw on Kristeva's proposal for a more complete semiotics, which she addressed as meta-language (1986). Meta-level awareness may be produced, Smith-Shank (1995) suggests, through a dialogue on the interrelationship of images, symbols and meaning - a practice that she states, may provide a useful basis for understanding visual culture. Cunningham & Shank (1992) argue similarly for the benefits of semiosis as a means of moving educators away from the structural dichotomies of a scientific rationalist approach which persist in our current teaching systems. What is envisaged here is a dialogic inquiry in which participants can respond to critical readings so as to produce insights or a semiotic voice from among the theorist, facilitator, and student. This semiotic voice may appear too as a meta-language within the circulation of critical reading, critical viewing, and critical thinking.

The following case study explores experiences of semiotic voice *as* meta-language, as reported by one participant after viewing the Jiří Skála exhibition *Two Families of Objects* at Hunt Kastner Artworks (November 2007). The exhibition consisted of twelve photographs taken by owners of machines which they had purchased from a failing Skoda factory after 2001 and before it closed in 2005. The artist was inspired to create the project after his father purchased the machine that his wife had worked on for thirty years for her fiftieth birthday. The participant Černochová responded to the viewing of the exhibition after reading a theoretical article on beauty:

The exhibition, also in context with the article from Yarowsky, is working with the relationship between art and life. It shows that the art should be as near to the world, in which we live, as possible. But it should also stand above the world, to see it from the distance, to give new view, new context. This is the recontextualisation, isn't it?

I think that pop culture mass media advertising are of course also a part of our lives. But they miss this distance, this 'objectivity', which I see in the seeing the world as an object, as material, with which the artist works, on a very subjective way, of course. The advertising and pop culture don't want to show the world in some new point of view, they want to reach some economic or politic success. (HU5, P15: Černochová, 2007)

Černochová's initial discourse revealed but also queried a belief in the transcendental nature of art, which she called "objectivity". By comparing this perceived quality of art with mass media and advertising, she set up a personal and critical comparison between the two objects. What she did not immediately encounter was the intertextuality at work in the exhibition's play on Umberto Eco's (1979) book *Travels in Hyper-reality: Two Families of Objects* (Hunt Kastner Artworks, 2007), or the bearing this might have on perceptions of the transformation from a strict socialist work and production system to the current liberal capitalist system. Similarly, another reading of the work might consider the metaphoric use of the word 'family', which points to the familiarity with which objects were treated by those who worked on them for substantial periods of time. In the transformations of these 'new family members', we observe the commodification of formerly 'ugly' objects, now transformed into ones that are sought after and bought. The photographs in the exhibition were not taken by the artist but by the people who purchased machines they worked on before the factory went bankrupt in 2005.

To give some social and cultural context, Skalá's exhibit is rooted in the contemporary displacement of objects that remain from the old system and which retain value for those who used them in their lives and jobs. It is part of a new genre of Czech contemporary art that began in the mid-1990s in the wake of Czech post-conceptual art, and which took the artist as social expressionist (Kastner, comment during curatorial presentation, November 2, 2007). The Skalá exhibit followed on from the widely lauded installation *It Doesn't Matter* by Jindřich Chalupecky Award Winner, Kateřina Šedá in 2005. This installation featured line drawings that Šedá's grandmother had drawn to recreate the entire storeroom of tools that she had operated for thirty years of factory work. Šedá's project began as a way to help her grandmother overcome the long-term depression that had set in after she lost her job, and it was widely acclaimed for its public value. As one student commented in explaining why she liked the installation, "Everybody has a grandmother like this in their family."

Černochová's response to the Skála exhibition conveyed a similar appreciation of enduring human values and inter-generational kinship.

My greatest impression from the exhibition was, that it shows the value of work, maybe human work. I am thinking about it sometimes, in context of the today's major society, mass media— that the goal is not to do anything and to have everything. But in this exhibition, in the photographs, which were taken by the proud owners of the machines, I saw that they take the work as a part of their lives, which is not only a necessary evil' for them, but something they like. And I found it great, that the young artist sees it also and that he appreciates it in his work. (HU5, P15: Černochová, 2007)

A Semiotic Co-Constructivism

Within a semiotic pedagogy, awareness shifts from didactics and dialectics to the process of interactive exchanges and interpretive discourses. Visual culture theory and curriculum often lack methodology in this area. It is not possible to speak about visual literacy – or semiotics for that matter - without speaking about the framework of reception and its context, as well as frameworks and systems of interpretation. It is for this reason that I focus on how coding systems operate to include the student voice alongside any other voices, giving it the same weight as all other voices, whether they come from critical theorists, scholars, contemporary artists, or other individuals.

Contemporary art and artists provide focus for this triadic inquiry process that extends as a dialogue into a broader network of discourses and connects theoretically different traditions, positions, histories, and disciplines. This is an inquiry that occurs within a triangular configuration, moving as it does between each individual's relationship to him/herself, his/her views about others, and the views of these others about the individual. The 'others' in question here may also be other forms of discourse and practice coming from contemporary artists, scholars, or theorists. By working through this triangular dialogue, we shift away from dualistic propositions into an interaction involving an additional co-equal perspective— a triality.

Theory Looks On

The etymology of the word 'theory' lies in the Greek *theoria* 'to look at.' Theory should be understood not as a set of prescribed interpretive methods, but as a 'looking at'. It is

the discourse that results when ideas of the nature and meaning of texts and their relation to other discourses, social practices, and human subjects become the object of general reflection (Culler cited in Bryson et al 1994, p. 15).

Critical theory has reshaped the terms of inquiry from a didactic and dialectical process to one where the inquirer's interpretations must be examined as a reflection of her/her own framework. Post-structural thought and deconstructive criticism challenged any intrinsic link between the form of an idea to be analyzed and the structure of the theory applied to it. Instead, both can be considered a reflection of the intersection between language, discourse, and their origins. Context in this sense is not given, but produced (Culler, cited by Bal & Bryson, 1991, p. 175). In other words, "What we take to be positive knowledge is the product of interpretive choices" (Bal & Bryson, 1991, p. 175). Continuing to cite Culler, Bal and Bryon consider the consequences of this semiotic turn for art history:

Since the phenomena criticism deals with are signs, forms with socially constituted meanings, one might try to think not of context but of the framing of signs: how are signs constituted (framed) by various discursive practices, institutional arrangements, systems of value, semiotic mechanisms? (p. 175)

This perspective opens up the way for examining the social factors that frame sign - a move which at once reveals the practices of the past and our current interaction with them (Bal & Bryson, p. 175).

Social reconstructivism and emancipatory pedagogies developed out of the significant work of Freire, Shor, Horton, Giroux, Greene, Banks, hooks, and others to help create the educational discourses and practices of a critical pedagogy to explore, critique and communicate opposition to create the intellectual rigor to respond to perceptions of oppression in socio-cultural and institutional practices. As all theory can be considered a form of encoded ideology, semiotics provides the means to examine its relationship to the socio-political function it serves. Examining oppositional relationships within the ideological anchor of origination often results in their discourses remaining within the same originating system of Aristotle's 'law of contradiction.'

Transformed Practice

Bohm (1994) concluded that any change – whether individual or systemic, starts not by imposing new ideas on old ones, but through the recognition of one's own meaning-making processes at work. This process has the potential to activate and empower individuals to make their own choices and decisions about the political hierarchy of knowledge. Aguirre (2004) applies this concept to art:

Acknowledge the importance that art objects have a performing power, a capacity to connect with every biography, and this can be experienced aesthetically and integrated into every lived experience, thus contributing to 'self-creation'. This is, in my opinion, the only transforming character which art and art education can possess. To achieve it is not particularly important whether the originating product comes from the fine arts or from popular arts. (p. 268)

At present, critique remains the primary teaching and learning tool of visual culture (Anderson & Milbrandt, 2005, p. 53). In turning away from theory and focusing on how individuals actively make meaning from interpretive processes within diverse visualities, we decenter the academic appropriation of critical theory into visual culture studies. This fundamental shift in the pedagogical treatment of visual culture attends to the individual's interpretive and meaning-making strategies through their own artmaking practices as well as the situated practice experienced by individuals through the perspective of theorists.

CHAPTER 4: INTERPRETIVE FRAMEWORK

“Up until now philosophers have only interpreted the world.

The point now is to change it.”

-Karl Marx and Fredrich Engels

(cited by Kristeva, 1986, p. 302)

New Discourse/s

The term ‘discourse’ tends to be used interchangeably with both dialogue, discussion, and conversation.¹ A traditional connotation of discourse relates to speech. Historically, discourses were spoken and transcribed speeches. It could be said that speech is a mode of linguistic discourse. Not limited to speech alone, discourse is not bound solely to the expression of ideas, but defines a space which creates them as well.

According to Gee (2004), discourses are distinctive ways that people talk, read, write, think, believe, value, act, and interact. Discourse is a way of using not just words, but also deeds, objects, tools and so forth, to enact a certain socially situated identity. According to Gee: “Discourses recruit specific social languages (way with words) and cultural models (taken-for-granted stories), which in turn encourage people to construct certain sorts of situated meanings – that is, encourage them to read context in given ways” (p.41). According to Gee, cultural models are, “...storylines, images, schemas, metaphors, and models about the world that tell people what is typical or normal from the perspective of a particular Discourse” (p. 40).

While Foucault (1972) never specifically gave a ‘definition’ of discourse, he used the terms ‘discourse’ and ‘orders of discourse’ to refer to fluid fields where spaces conveying the meaning of power were created and managed - whether this involved establishing identity, social status, relationships between people, or specific ways of experiencing or understanding the world. Discourse can be understood as a group of énoncés which are not necessarily tied to speech. Enoncés, translated from the French language, cannot be adequately represented by its English textual equivalent of ‘statements.’ Non-verbal gestures and their interpretations in various settings can be considered as a mode of

discourse. This opens the possibility for discourse to be non-linguistic. In other words, discourses operate at many different levels within systemic contexts.

Within any particular discourse, 'layers' of meaning are embedded. Thinking of discourse in terms of 'discursive layers' instead of the Foucaultian term 'orders of discourse' is a way of signifying the dialogic meanings distributed and operating in the contexts where they appear, including the power relationships in which they are formed and legitimated by institutional, cultural, or social systems (Fulková, 2000).

Within any particular discourse are embedded 'layers' of meaning. Thinking of discourse in terms of 'discursive layers' instead of the Foucaultian term 'orders of discourse', is an approach to signifying the distribution of dialogic meanings as they operate within the contexts in which they appear, including the power relationships in which they are formed and legitimated by institutional, cultural, or social systems (Fulková, 2000).

Social relationships are signified by roles or positions within social practices, with political implications for status, solidarity, distribution of social goods, and power. "Discourse uses language integrated with thinking, being, acting, interacting, believing, knowing, feeling, valuing, dressing, and using one's body to enact a particular socially situated identity. It is also distinctive ways of using various symbols, images, objects, artifacts, tools, technologies, times, places, spaces....Discourses are always defined in relationship to other Discourses" (Gee, 2004, p. 46). Student discourses, on the other hand, are often excluded from the oeuvre of visual knowledge and art-as-practice research.

What Rodowick (2001) adds to this theoretical understanding, is the transformation of discourse beyond either linguistic or plastic spaces. He terms this 'between-world' space *the figural*, where linguistic and plastic spaces puncture each other - a field that contemporary art and cultural production occupy. The figural is not to be confused with figurative. It is neither necessarily representational, nor linguistically described.

...the figural defines a semiotic regime where the ontological distinction between linguistic and plastic representations breaks down. The new electronic, televisual, and digital media explicitly challenges this opposition, which has been the philosophical foundation of aesthetics since the eighteenth century. In this respect, the electronic media have inaugurated a new regime of signs and new ways of thinking, which is why philosophy runs 'after' the new media. (Rodowick, 2001, p. 2)

This non-dualistic space operates throughout the order of language but is not tied to its signification. How educators pay attention to this space is an essential aspect of new discourse in visual culture arts education. This is why Rodowick's concept of *the figural* is so important. *The figural* repositions non-dualistic knowing and experiencing back into arts and cultural discourse (Fulková & Tipton, 2008, p. 32)

Dialogic Inquiry Methods

Dialogue is a form of discourse and any particular dialogue consists of a variety of discourses. *Dialogue*, as Bohm used the word, drawing on its Greek etymology, is a stream of meaning that flows across, between, and through two or more people (Bohm, 1994). Used in this manner, dialogue allows for the tacit infrastructure of thought to be revealed in a facilitated setting with others. It requires the suspension of assumptions and judgments in order to observe the content and process of one's thoughts, as well as to cultivate responsive listening to those of others. As Malek (2007) writes,

I enjoyed your words, that listening to other persons can change oneself, the effect was that I listened in a different way. I was more open to the thoughts of other people. (HU5, P6: Malek, 2007)

Jenlink and Banathy (2005) extend Bohm's definition of dialogue to refer to a form of conversation that allows people to connect within and across cultures. The term *Dialogic inquiry* as it is used here, is taken from Wells, where discursive modes are used critically in conjunction with artifact and action as a 'tool-kit' for meaning-making (Wells, 1999). Wells cautioned that any analytic framework must focus on the different functions that 'talk' performs in enabling, interpreting, and evaluating the joint activities of which it is a part

Dialogic communication provides a vehicle for revealing one's own values, thought patterns and constructs, while providing a tool for engaging with the values, thoughts, and opinions of others. Respect is a shared agreement between participants about the manner in which communications are formulated and delivered. In the following excerpt, Melanen (2006) reflects on her experience of conversational learning:

Asking questions was somehow important learning for me though it might sound a little bit banal now. I have understood it earlier with my essays, usually in the beginning [why is this important/ what do I want to handle]. Asking question is important part of process of thinking. Questions should be asked principally from myself when viewing and writing: why am I saying this? What is behind my perceptions: Can I go deeper into my thoughts? But important task is to ask questions to other people too; it is the key in understanding the others' perceptions and maybe learn from them. Can you say why you think so? Can you explain more? Though there are many kinds of questions, it would be important to comprehend the appropriate questions in the situation. When art is the subject we talk about, the questions are a significant part of communication. (HU2, P6: Melanen, 2006)

Dialogic listening, reflecting, querying, and searching are part of a circulation between textual and non-textual modes of knowing that are brought to bear on the intertextual (or intervisual) debate of cognition and understanding.

Recontextualizing Perception/Reception

In art education, aesthetic theory developed as a set of scientific structures that, combined with the value system of the Enlightenment and a belief in objective truth, were used to explain the value of art through its phenomenology. Around this, there developed issues of reception and related issues about the use and interpretation of socio-cultural and historical practices in art. Until post-modernism, however, such belief systems tended to universalize and totalize their interpretations as inherent truths and facts.

In the field of contemporary art, a phenomenological approach to reception, context, and subjectivity is insufficient without a corresponding proprioception about the constellation of its own discursive elements of thought. Today, perception is understood not only in terms of its conscious processes, but in its unconscious processes, which as Freud,

Kristeva, Lacan, Rodowick, and Bohm all point out in their respective fields, act as unspoken forces. The latter, whether considered as the 'chora' or 'figural', are understood as sublimated elements of experience that emerge in an interacting network of radically different forms and expressions, always more connected with the creative process than any abstraction, discussion, terminology, or treatise. Inquiry must also turn to the very suppositions and constructs that its propositions are embedded with, as Kristeva (1986) points out.

The model of vision which says that an optical image is projected upon the retina as a mechanically complete recording of its physical counterpart has been replaced by one that describes light's simultaneous reception and interpretation through the optic nerve, where it is assembled, configured and projected back to look at what is expected to be seen (Favareau, 2002). The complexity of this interaction calls for reconceptualizing of our models of sensory-perception-cognition in more depth:

What we 'see' is not always physically present as in the illusion of Mach bands – a series of increasingly darker greys. The color is lighter next to a darker color, and a darker next to a lighter. "...what we 'see' is, to a large degree, determined by our knowledge of what we 'should' see, which is based on our previous experiences. (Solso, 1993, p. 74)

Just as the model for nerve cell functioning has changed from on and off-responses to that of a continuous and simultaneously ready and active response mechanism, a (holographic) multi-dimensional model of interactivity positions the process of reception and perception within a different conception of time, space, and matter that cannot be represented in former mechanistic terms (Favareau, 2002). Solso (1993)'s earlier model draws upon the idea of an organizing schemata:

We organize perceptions of the world in terms of schemata...we establish forms for impressions. We see art through a filter created by our personal schema. (p. 121)

Their work implies a corresponding shift in the conceptual models looking at works of art where, "...reception is a work with signs that opens onto the 'polytheism' of hidden and dispersed practices that make up semiotic play" (Bal & Bryson, 1991, p. 187).

A traditional opposition between sensory-perceptual experience and cognition underlies the rational empiricism of the scientific paradigm, adopted by the social sciences and other disciplines as the validity framework defining knowledge and its propositions. Recognizing the 'split' as one of distinction rather than opposition, on the other hand, opens up a honomic space where we can mediate a shift from an 'either-or' conceptualization to a '*both-and*' interpretation. This is a systems view where two perspectives can occupy the same place at the same time, as Heisenberg discovered was possible with electrons in physics. Heisenberg also observed that we can't know the electron directly but only as what it becomes in relation to the instruments used to observe it (Nanni, 2000).

In systems theory, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. "Our mind 'sees' things that the eye alone never could" (Solso, 1993, p. 76).

...fundamental forms are given meaning through association with previous knowledge of the world stored in long-term memory LTM) (sometimes called 'higher-order cognition' because it occurs as the consequence of previous 'lower' stages)...The thinking brain directs our attention to specific parts of a visual scene, giving greater notice to salient features of personal interest. Finally, the brain adds information to the raw visual impressions, giving it richness of meaning beyond mere visual stimuli. (p. 75-8)

Semiotic theorists have extended the relational dyad of art and spectator found in curatorial and critical discourses so as to include the 'empirical spectator' as a source of discourse. 'Empirical spectator' is a term Bal & Bryson (1991) used in describing the reception of art by the actual person experiencing art instead of an idealized and universalized *everyone*. Situating reception through the lens of the empirical spectator is a keystone to developing pedagogical encounters with contemporary art (Fulková et. al, 2004). There are many ways to approach discourses of empirical spectators - not least from psychosocial, gender, multicultural, eco-political, and critical perspectives. Gaze, as Nanni (2000) suggests, is not just the way in which something is looked at, but also an assumption of a collective eye as a validity construct. The relationship between gaze and vision, as a set of cognitive operations driving visual awareness, is better understood as a process of inherently creative, optical play. Fulkova gives an example of how these various frames intersect:

For example, using a quotation from an 1890 fashion advertisement, mothers were admonished "not to put trousers on their son if they are not four years old or unless they are very tall." This and other textual references from literature, fashion magazines, quotes, and cases, calls into question that images are not neutral and contain within them a co-determinate of the concept of 'gaze' – or who the art was made for. When dealing with images of women, the implied construction of images have embedded values and gender roles as well as mass media stereotypes and socio-cultural expectations and meanings. (Fulkova, White Folder, 2003)

The above text illustrates the inextricable link between gaze and other intersections such as cultural models, socio-cultural norms, and conditioning, as well as values and beliefs. Only the empirical spectator, however, knows how these intersections constellate within themselves.

The impact of digital media and technology on learning, perception, and cognition, while not extensively studied, nevertheless demonstrates that immersion in electronic digital and multidimensional simultaneities stimulates new cognitive patterns in young people today than those that were previously assumed by stage theories of development (Darley, 2000). A proprioception of thinking can be revealed within a process of dialogic inquiry, as Lewin (1951) also found in his U.S. National Training Laboratory in Group Development in 1947. Lewin concluded that learning is best facilitated in an environment where there is dialectical tension and conflict between analytic detachment and immediate, concrete experience. By combining the two in a process that revealed the conceptual models of the participants in an open atmosphere and where inputs from each perspective could challenge and stimulate the other, a learning environment of remarkable vitality and creativity was set up.

Other conceptual models demonstrate how individuals connect with and test ideas and information in different ways (Kolb, 1984; McCarthy, 1987/2005; Gardner, 1984; Perkins, 1983). The experiential learning approach seeks to develop a conversational space where the praxis between reflection and action is fully recognized (Baker, Jensen & Kolb, 1997, as cited by Baker, Jensen & Kolb, 2002).

Thus, the semiotic relationship determining how the 'empirical spectator' processes information and goals is multi-variant and enacted in multi-dimensional ways, only one of which involves the concrete experience of pre-determined inputs and content. Learning styles research demonstrates that individuals may be predisposed to certain styles of learning – or not – as well as various kinds of visual thinking.

Learning styles may be supported or diminished by the structure and means by which learning processes are enacted. In art education, the question of how to promote and measure creativity requires allowing for the impact of novelty, spontaneity, accident, experimentation, chance, and other unpredictable factors. These factors cannot solely be fixed through goals and structures. Behind creative imagination and the production of artworks is the puncturing of categorization and theoretical representations, explanations, and justifications. For some learners, action comes first and theory follows, but knowing in both realms appears to occur simultaneously. As a tool of constructivism, conversational learning provides a tool for the individual to apprehend and conceptualize these interrelated aspects of knowing.

Visuality as a Field of Inter(ception)

Based on constructivist pedagogy, the situating of meaning-making in the context of the learner is one of the most important changes influencing art museum education practice today. The socio-cultural origins of the concept in the work of Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 1978), were explored by Horton and Freire (1991), Dewey (1934/1938), Piaget (1968), Halliday (1993), Harding (1995), and others, who laid the foundation for constructivism to take hold as pedagogical practice. As the discrepancy between passive and active modes and forms of looking is not accounted for in traditional art and cultural education curriculum, special pedagogical techniques are necessary to demystify the (fictional) surface of objectivity. Edwards (1991) elaborates the demystification process in discourse analysis within schooling practices.

According to constructivist pedagogy, engaging with multiple modes of inquiry,

speaking, reflecting, and knowing, provides the seminal ground for the emergence of meaning-making and new knowledge. The theoretical underpinnings for dialogic inquiry as a co-constructive process lie in Vygotsky's (1978) 'zone of proximal development' theory, which proposed that learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes able to operate only when one interacts with surrounding people and in cooperation with one's peers (p. 90). 'Re-construction', as part of the internally engendered processes evoked through their interaction with external stimuli, is the basis of an individual's own act(ion) of meaning-making. I use the term 'semiotic co-constructivism' as a synthesis re-presenting the interaction between the mutually defining and creative influences of semiosis and constructivism. What is missing in contemporary discourse within both arts and visual culture education is an understanding that the construction of knowledge - in the Vygotskian sense of its socio-cultural positionality - is a co-constructive process. It is a mode of discovery requiring the mediation between information, experience, and understanding as well as sensitizing facilitative guidance. Lambert et al (2002) put it, "Such learning draws from our knowledge of constructivism as evoking mental maps of the world, engaging with others to learn new knowledge and make sense of it, and reordering or deepening understandings" (p. xvi).

Bohm (1994/1998) extends Chardin's use of the 'noosphere' concept that thought or human cognition influences and connects with others. Bohm's form of dialogue was intended to reveal the processes and structures of thought as it manifests individually and collectively in group settings. He argued that until a *proprioception of thinking* is developed, any new content for thinking will merely be an add-on to existing ways in which individuals think about how they *see* the world.

Practicing Bohm's use of dialogue supports the ability not only to *see*, but to simultaneously witness experience without separating oneself from it. His concept is similar to Eve Sedgwick's (2003) model of finding a '*beside*' - a place that defies the terms of duality without denying its existence. Unlike remaining at the distance which eighteenth-century aesthetics posited between viewers and works of art, cultivating meta-level thinking requires both engagement and distance *at the same time*. As Derrida (1987)

points out, the border that encapsulates works of art within art history discourse, and which makes aesthetics possible, is a conceptual construction that ceases to exist as soon as it is realized.

In his seminal work on developing languages of art, Goodman (1976) develops the idea of codification as a replacement for description when developing notations for symbols, assigning labels to classification systems and their ‘objects’, and related rules of category compliance. A brief overview of Goodman’s model is that when describing an object or event, a label is attached to its denotations. The label belongs to a family of alternatives that collectively sort objects within families into a domain. A family of alternatives may be called a scheme. The objects that it sorts are its realm. Objects can be representations that do not relate to specific material forms. A system is a scheme applied to a realm. A label may belong to several systems and be assigned different interpretations. A scheme may not be exclusively associated with a single realm. A single realm is subject to alternative schematizations. Metaphors apply schemes in novel ways that are not linked literally. Metaphor enables us to avail ourselves of the organizational powers of a system while transcending the system’s limitations. Introducing this material to students is at first complex, but assists in clarifying incoherencies when assumptions are made in speech without understanding the way in which terminology is being applied. In working with this material, Černochová designs a model to help clarify the structure of Goodman’s scheme [Figure 22].

Symbols work by rules of correlation that can be understood through denotation and the exemplification of their characteristics. Combined with Barthes’ (1977) model of connotation and denotation, Goodman’s concepts are useful tools for students learning to use semiotic concepts with visual events. Goodman (1976) and Bohm (1994) each caution about the danger of confusion and incoherence if the system of codification and its

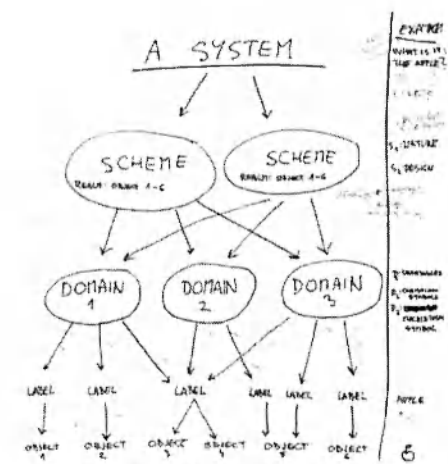


Figure 22: Černochová schematizes Goodman. Černochová (2006)

terms are not clearly understood or agreed upon. This is especially apparent if meaning is presumed to be embedded within an image itself.

Reconceptualizing Representation¹

While knowledge is one way of conceptualizing representations of artifacts, representations are best understood not as stable entities or images in the mind, but as a formation process. Well's distinction of three levels of representation is useful for this discussion (Wells, 1999, p. 67). Primary artifacts, he posits, transform part of an environment into objects and processes. Secondary artifacts refer to a realm involving skills used in the production of primary artifacts, such as instructions for making or using something. Tertiary artifacts deal with an imaginary activity based on the formal properties of representations, without concern for their direct applicability. Tertiary processes are embodied by imaginary artifacts and the creative interplay of ideas. What makes something a representational artifact is the intention about how it is to be used rather than anything inherent in the artifact itself. Establishment of a discourse assumes a process by which meaning is constructed and identified from primary, secondary, and tertiary artifacts through talking, text, and inquiry, allowing for spoken and written discourse to be synthesized reflectively and critically. Wells, however, focuses his model on lingual-based forms of representation that can be extended into non-lingual representations, as Goodman elaborated.

Dialogues about written (and visual), spoken, experiential, and conceptual representations - covering them from their physical to their abstract levels, allow for a liberation from the connotation of realism that is fixed to ideas of 'representation' and 'representational' so that they may apply to a wider field of multidimensional structures. As such, as a multi-modal form of knowing, representation tends to be obscured by the current semantic emphasis on 'textual' interpretations. 'Intertextuality' tends to be misused conceptually when assumptions are made that literal texts are mediators equivalent to non-text events. For instance, reading the lyrics of a song is not the same as listening to the song. And yet, both lyrics and song may be considered as 'texts'. This is the conundrum Goodman

pointed out happens when words are used without 'representing' their meanings intentionally. Representations can be textual or non-textual, non-verbal or verbal, intellectual, kinesthetic, auditory or psychic. Representations are ways of knowing that 'in'-form us – a literal formative process from the 'inside-out,' synchronized with the 'outside-in', as we make meaning of our encounters with all aspects of our visual world.

All of these 'texts' or ways of knowing serve as discourses that can be simultaneously constructed and deconstructed according to the individual needs of viewers, giving significance to the character and process of viewing as much as to the artifacts. By using Wells' (1999) idea that artifacts are not necessarily physical objects and are not necessarily their representations but rather how they are used, we open up a space for the emergence of multiple levels of meaning in the discourse on artifacts of any kind, whether they exist inside gallery and museum spaces or outside of them.

Re-lating to Relationships

Influenced by quantum physics, a new paradigm of an undivided order has emerged, and it is often referred to as 'the unified field.' Einstein originally coined the term to unify his theory of relativity with electromagnetism. Contributing to this paradigm is Einstein's former co-worker, the Nobel prize winning physicist Bohm (1980), who was active in the elaboration of Einstein's concept. Bohm also adapted Karl Pribram's work on the neurophysiology of the brain, reconceptualizing the nature of 'reality' as similar to that of a hologram. In a hologram, interference patterns are enfolded and carry information from each of the other waves of light, energy and matter they have directly or indirectly contacted. In this paradigm, 'reality' is not composed of things but can be seen as an ongoing flux of events and possibilities within a stream of unending movement, what Bohm (1980) termed 'the Implicate Order':

...relativity and quantum theory...both imply the need to look on the world as an *undivided whole*, in which all parts of the universe, including the observer and his instruments, merge and unite in one totality, In this totality, the atomistic form of insight is a simplification and an abstraction, valid only in some limited context. (p. 11)

Contributing to this idea, Grof & Bennett (1993) add,

The exploration of the microworld soon revealed that the universe of everyday life, which appears to us to be composed of solid, discrete objects, is actually a complex web of unified events and relationships. Within this new context, consciousness does not just passively reflect the objective material world, it plays an active role in creating reality itself. (p. 6)

Adapting his theory of the Implicate Order to group process, Bohm developed a model of collective dialogue practiced in order to observe the flow of thoughts and its conditioning. In his model of 'dialogic communication', participants learn how to observe thoughts without judgment in order to experience the form and movement of their conditioning. Jenlink and Banathy (2005) elaborate that conversation forms the basis of inter- and intra-subjectivity that combines with cultural creativity.

Because 'thought' itself is a past-tense form of the process of thinking, thought reflects experience that has arisen in the past. This distinction is significant for understanding the difference between Bohm's model and ordinary dialogue. Because the process of thinking has been conditioned to be fixed in thoughts, thoughts tend to repeat themselves semi-automatically in a closed-system loop that appears in conditioned reflexes.

Bohm showed how current mental conditioning has a built in *error* which must be perceived, when thought thinks of itself as *correct*. From these errors are cultivated numerous incoherencies that are transmitted within social and cultural domains. Thus, Bohm created and used an open-ended, experiential form of dialogue through which the process of thinking can be experienced within a fluid, dynamic, and systemic context. In order for changes in thinking to occur, its incoherencies must first be seen without the imposition or domination of another thought to replace the already existing incoherency. Bohm demonstrated how incoherent patterns of thought tend to be resistant to new information and actually interfere with the change process itself. This will be of no surprise to Spitz (1985). Spitz attributed this barrier to the necessary aspect of transference, which can be revealed in psychotherapy. Thus, Bohm stresses the importance of paying attention to the activity of thought as a form of insight and not reality as it is.

Rather, all of our different ways of thinking are to be considered as different ways of looking at the one reality, each with some domain in which it is clear and adequate. One may indeed compare a theory to a particular view of some object. Each view gives only an appearance of the object in some aspect. The whole object is not perceived in any one view, but rather, it is grasped only *implicitly* as that single reality which is shown in all these views. When we deeply understand that our theories also work in this way, then we will not fall into the habit of seeing reality and acting toward it as if it were constituted of separate existent fragments corresponding to how it appears in our thought and in our imagination when we take our theories to be 'direct description of reality as it is.' (Bohm, 1980, p. 7-8)

Bohm's work in dialogic communication thus functioned as a living laboratory to work through incoherences conditioned from mental models. Bohm (1980) suggests that fundamental to this process is the need for creative perception (p. 34).

Clarity of perception and thought evidently requires that we be generally aware of how our experience is shaped by the insight (clear or confused) provided by the theories that are implicit or explicit in our general ways of thinking. (p. 6)

Creative perception is a skill that develops not as a set of rules but as an *art*.

Thus it is not right, for example, to regard the division between relevance and irrelevance as a form of accumulated knowledge of properties belonging to statements (e.g. by saying that certain statements 'possess' relevance while others do not). Rather, in each case, the statement of relevance or irrelevance is communicating a perception taking place at the moment of expression, and is the individual context indicated in that moment. As the context in question changes, a statement that was initially relevant may thus cease to be so, or vice versa. Moreover, one cannot even say that a given statement is either relevant or irrelevant, and that this covers all the possibilities. Thus, in many cases, the total context may be such that one cannot clearly perceive whether the statement has bearing or not. This means that one has to learn more, and that the issue is, as it were, in a state of flux. (Bohm, 1980, p. 34)

Used in this manner, dialogic inquiry is an open-ended process used to establish proprioception about thinking, meaning-making and perception. Cultivating meta-level skills where it is possible to hold dynamically different positions at once within an open system as a field of relationships however, is rarely practiced. Its equivalence, though, can be found in a form of singing indigenous to the Tuval people of Central Asia, where several vocal notes can be intoned simultaneously.

As Grof & Bennett (1993) said of Bohm's work,

The common denominator of all these and other recent theories that offer alternatives to Newtonian thinking is that they see consciousness and creative intelligence not as derivatives of matter-more specifically of the neurophysiological activities in the brain- but as important primary attributes of all existence. The study of consciousness, once seen as the poor cousin of the physical sciences, is rapidly becoming the center of attention in science. (p. 11)

Thus, as the entrance to other modes of knowing widens, the classical scientific model is increasingly delimited as the sine qua non of knowledge. In the condition of paradox, where two seemingly opposite ideas find their co-existence, logic and reason alone are unable to disentangle their own contradictory positions without cases of opposing or sublimating dualities. "To this end, it is useful to emphasize that experience and knowledge are one process rather than to think that our knowledge is *about* some sort of separate experience" (Bohm, 1980, p. 6).

In the domain of the holographic mind, perception and cognition are understood as a dynamic alliance between the created and uncreated potential within every person and their relationships from the inner, psychological landscape to the outer skins of the world.

We ultimately come to the realization that all perceptions and knowledge – including scientific work – are not objective reconstructions of reality; instead, they are creative activities comparable to artistic expressions. We cannot measure true reality; in fact, the very essence of reality is its immeasurability...No longer confined to the limited logic of traditional thought, the part ceases to be just a fragment of the whole but, under certain circumstances, reflects and contains the whole. (Grof & Bennett, 1993, p. 10)

Community of Learners and Practice in Community Art Spaces

Connecting the creative use of thinking to creativity as it manifests in artistic practices, linking participants from educational settings to community arts and cultural spaces recognizes the interrelationship between designing pedagogical concepts in concert with practical experience. Educations programs inside museum/gallery spaces are shifting towards a recognition of what the viewer brings to the contents of a museum/gallery

space instead of the traditional dyad in which museum professionals brings its contents to viewers (Fulková & Tipton, 2008) [Figure 23].

While most museums as well as art professionals, choose to (con)textualize their interpretations from a formalistic focus, students use iconographic elements from their experiential subcultures and project them into the content of their visual encounters. Their codes of reference, in large part, do not contain those used by museum, gallery and art professionals (p. 27). Successful collaborations between education and museums and galleries, therefore, must be built upon bringing these neo-narratives into discourse.



Figure 23: Galerie Rudolfinum Education Program. Tipton (2008).

In traditional museum and gallery education programs, students are given factual and (con)textual information about art and artists with the focus on 'talking the tour' presentations of guides. Generally, under/graduate and high school students both expect this model of interaction. But the power of spoken discourse to reveal the potency of contemporary art exhibitions lies in the fact of actual interactivity, within diverse interfaces with others and the symbolic coding that is developed, deconstructed, and restructured so that group understanding ultimately transcends prior knowledge and reinvents new knowledge and experience from their interplay.

All knowledge, all learning, all identity, is re/cognition. Re/cognition is the processing of thought by revisiting knowledge structures even after they have been carved into a narrative form in consciousness: to re/cognize has the ultimate effect of disrupting previous forms. Re/cognition shaves away at the integrity and fixity of our existing knowledge frames. Discourse spins knowledge structures from mind to mind as in a workshop lathe. And in that discursive and transcognitive action upon knowledge structures, cognitions reinterpretive tools are called upon to run across the contours of that knowledge, reshaping knowledge to fit new narrative parameters required for growth. (Rollings, Jr., 2004, p. 75)

Positioning the viewer from the 'text of their lives' (Barthes, 1977) into the text of an exhibition, (Mayer, 2005) is enriched by an expanded sense of one's own meaning-making. In the same manner, dialogic communication provides a vehicle for revealing

one's own values, thought patterns and constructs, while providing a tool for engaging with the values, thoughts, and opinions of others. Dialogic listening, reflecting, querying, and searching are non-textual modes of knowing that are brought to bear on the inter-textual debate of cognition and understanding. When used with reflective writing practice, insights emerge from the alchemy between viewing, thinking, discussing, reflecting, writing, and doing. As Melanen (2006) writes, "I have learned to pay attention to the process of thinking and this is something that I understood reading my texts now afterwards" (HU2, P6).

Practices of Looking, Gazing, and Codes of Viewing

Coding and expectations conditioned from digital media; interactive, multimedia games; shopping, friendships, television, arcades and simulation games, sports, music, movie stars, and other aspects of popular culture, predominate the frames of reference of school-age students.

The image as a representation of a particular set of signs, which is interpreted in various discourse(s) is better understood not a *reality* but as a gestalt of sign system exchange. A gestalt is a coherent whole with its own laws and through constructs of the individual's mind rather than of an abstracted, objective reality. This complex dynamic, constellates visual experience as a semiotic encounter with the dynamics of 'gaze.' Throughout the contemporary world, gaze tends to be a dichotomized experience instead of a unified one as, it can appear in various indigenous systems where looking, being looked at and what is seen are not always separated. Pedagogically, it is revealing to ask students to consider various discursive layers of 'gaze' such as 'looking' (who is the spectator?), the 'subject' (who is speaking and for whom?), 'identity' (who is being performed), the context of 'positionality' (where does one locate oneself when speaking?) and their interpretive frameworks (how does one ascribe meaning to experience?) Socio-culturally, gazing has been conditioned through practices of spectating and codes of looking. Looking and being looked at are codified and into various forms of sign-event exchanges that are culturally and socially normative to behaviors and commodities exchanged in multiple

spheres of influence and places. The normative conditions for looking are culturally situated and are at great variance according to its context and conditions. Gazing, as an unbounded mode of looking, is a performative device of being seen, as Duane Hanson's creation of life-like sculptures iconically illustrates [Figure 24].

The difficulty of gaze is, "...the subject's systematic misrecognition of the externality of the visual discourses through which it organizes sight: for unlike a computer programmed to manipulate chains of signifiers, the human being is, according to Lacan, also structured in such a way as to produce a continuous sense of itself as autonomous headquarters of signification, an 'I' that looks out at the world from a



Figure 24: Duane Hanson (1974) Drug Addict together with unidentified museum guest. Malek (2006)

central vantage point, experiencing the visual field as a horizon always composed around itself." (Bal & Bryson, 1991, p. 199). Scott & Vargas (2007) describe this process from the language of images,

We might further anticipate that people learn to read pictures critically (just as they do text), adapt the pictures they read to new situations, use images they read to create new things or ideas—even reject what they read in one visual text, in favor of what they read in another. Thus, we limit our comprehension of what really goes on in the processing of pictorial communications when we insist on defining such messages as concrete, sensory, or even iconic rather than admitting the very clear ability of pictures to be abstract, conceptual, and even tools for thought. (p. 343)

In my seminar, *A Semiotic Reading of Advertising Imagery*, participants explored the way gaze was portrayed in photographic images seen locally in mass media publications and advertisements. Gaze often appears with a demanding authoritativeness that is overtly and covertly used in the genres and conventions of advertising.

Hall (1966)'s early research in advertising associated gaze and pose codings that establish a position and create an invisible but defined border of social distance. From the interaction between viewer and advertising images by positional codings, people are seen

in various ways.

'Types' of women and men are imaged and seen in 'genderized displays' of cultural and class membership by body positions that offer or demand (Goffman, 1979). This offer and demand posturing is equivocated by an offer or demand of textual voice; and the interpersonal semiotic of images that Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) define as inviting individual connotations and reminiscences through associations made by looking. An example of this is the reflective and artistic work by Černochová:



Figure 25: Child beauty queen.
Dnes Černochová, (2006)

The analysis of the images of men and women was full of ideas. We could start with the content analysis, describing the images according to the variables. And this analysis opened for me always a lot of impulses for creation of some meaning, some opinion. This content analysis with the variables is quite easy, I think, it could be used in the school. It opens the dialogue, it makes people to build and say their ideas, the quantitative data gives reasons for the opinions. (HU4, P4: Černochová, 2006) [Figure 25]

The following week, she took an image of a woman she found in a fashion magazine and transformed it artistically [Figure 26].

In the last meeting we were talking about the components of the image, which looked strange to us. So I played with them. I multiplied the bow or changed the color of the bow and the lips of the model. Through the copying of the image changed also the colors of the body and the background. The model on the original image seemed to me to have no soul, no thinking, to be only a clothes-hanger. When the bow was red, it seemed on her breast like a window to the heart. And the black-and-white eyes with the black background looked sad. Maybe I wanted to make her to be more human, not to look so hard and impersonal. By changing of the image I put there some components, which have some meaning for me. So I could see something more, than only a stupid model, which sells clothes. (HU4, P6: Černochová, 2007) [Figure 27]



Figure 26: Fashion Image.
Černochová (2006)



Figure 27: Altered Image.
Černochová (2006)

This work influenced her to explore how these ideas were working within a weekly local, popular culture magazine, *Reflex* (13, 2007). She decided to do a content analysis of them and presented them as a research for “Testing Semiotic Hypotheses”.

I was looking for some images for a collage in magazines. My intention was to find images of men and women. I took one (*Reflex* magazine, No. 13/2006) and after listing through a half of the sides I could not find one image of a woman. So I got the idea to collect all images in this one magazine and to compare them. I can group the images – only photographs – in some categories. There were images with only men or only women or with both. Also there were images with only one or two people or bigger groups.

In the images I was also differencing people, who smiles and people who don't smile. The results:

I found 303 images of people in the magazine, of these are 81 women and 222 men. I also did a small table relating to the categoriesa I described:

Image	not smiling		smiling		total
Women	24		14		38
Men	132		37		169
Together in groups	Women	35	Women	8	43
	Men	50	Men	3	53
Men only Groups					25
Total	241		62		303 people 81 women 222 men

I could go on in the interpretation, it is very interesting to compare the data or the images one another.

During this work I was thinking about the answer to the question:

- What does gender want?
- Do we want more images of women in magazines?
- Do we want more smiling men on the images, where they are together with women?
- Do we want to show, how chauvinistic are the creators of the magazines?
- I think, that it is more global:

I want to show, with the aid of this small research, how the situation today is, and I ask, if it agrees with the reality. I want to show other people the results and make

them realize the influence of the images to them. When people know about the influences, they can choose, if they accept it or not. I want to show, that there are stereotypes in the visual communication, which may not be correct or fair to many people. (HU4, P7: Černochová, 2007)

Associations that are already conditioned or categorized by a particular critical pedagogical or theoretical lens, i.e. objectification, domination, appropriation, privileging, etc., can be tested semiotically. Using these codings for learners, conditions them to validate how they already exist, or what Goffman (1979) referred to as a style of generalization-by-pronouncement (pp. 24-5).

Revisiting Subjectivities

While Foucault has left a lasting contribution towards the understanding of subjectivities and their relationship to power and institutional mechanisms, agency has come to be understood in various ways and dimensions according to the subject and theory it is derived from. Kockelman (2007) draws upon classical ideas that humans make themselves, both individually and collectively but engage in self-creation under conditions that are not of their own choosing (p. 375).

As a precursor to contemporary theory of agency, Kockelman's theory is a multidimensional, graduated and distributed model with the intersections of knowledge and power on the one hand and flexibility and accountability on the other. Multidimensional models can also be found as the basis of learning theory (Kolb, 1984; McCarthy, 1987) and Wilber (2000).

Using meta-language to examine the relationship between semiotic and symbolic orders, Kristeva (1986) contributes the idea of the 'speaking subject' to break the assumption of a universalizing discourse. "Who is speaking and to whom?" become seminal questions especially as they relate to the way the individual as a *subject-in-process*, is an ongoing signifying act, posited and divided through and in language (Kristeva, 1986, 94).

Lacan assumes that the signifier can be visual as well as verbal, and that just as the signifier in the domain of language produces a speaking subject, so in the domain of vision it produces a 'seeing subject,' that is, a subject whose mode of

seeing is the product of the signifier as it operates upon vision. (Bal & Bryson, 1991, p. 199)

One aspect of analysis is positionality of voice, or subjectivity. By asking by what process do people become subjects with assumed identities, Butler (2006) extends the idea that a subject as a linguistic formation (and a gender) is *performed* and asks what the self-location is. Butler (1990/1999) asks by what processes do people become subjects with assumed identities. How are identities constructed, how do they work/not work? *Subject* as a linguistic formation, is not a given, it is always becoming, being performed. What is subversive? What consolidates power? How much choice do individuals have? Asking questions is a Hegelian dialectic: the mode of philosophical inquiry in which a thesis is proposed is subsequently negated by its antithesis and resolved by synthesis. Knowledge proceeds by position and cancellation, an open-ended process. Resolution to problems and issues with the ideological assumptions of self-evident truths oppresses certain groups in society. Students, in their own ways, act this out, calling attention to it by their comments about images and responses to others. By asking students to consider what their cultural self-location is and to explore it through contemporary art, reveals how any critique must also be examined at a meta-level for its assumptions, as well as its omissions, as Derrida exemplified.

Inherent in any form of voice is not just the act of speaking or of being heard but also the practice of active listening. Active listening is silent and observational, giving room to differences of opinion without cutoff or interruption or an imposition of superior knowing.

To discover the relational aspects between types of discourse, dialogue initiates internal and external analytical and critical conversations that may lead to uncomfortable discoveries.

...feminist art history came increasingly to situate female experience within a larger framework of multiple and fluid gendered identities and positions, and to consider gender as only one of many factors in a constantly shifting and evolving, often tensely balanced, pattern of power relationships. (Broude & Garrard, 2005, p. 1)

Professional Identity

The professional identity of the teacher in general, and the art teacher in particular, is clearly problematic. Studies revealing the perceptions of professional growth, teaching concerns, and feelings of uncertainty offer greater insight into the consequences for the thinking and behavior of teachers. (Van den Berg, 2002, p. 577). Van den Berg calls for greater attention to the identification of teachers' meanings with regard to educational practice. Discussing some of these factors, La Porte, Speris, and Young (2008) cite that while contemporary practice in arts education may emphasize relevant feminist, social, and critical theories to offer progressive possibilities for pre-service students, their application in practice is not necessarily transferable (p. 358). What the pre-service students knew and how comfortable they felt teaching were of the highest influence in their subsequent classroom experience (p. 367). Additional factors included the attitudes, interests, and needs of their students (p. 366).

While art contains the largest number of unqualified teachers than any other subject in Czech Republic, its exceptional teachers 'create the image of practice' (Slavík, 2006, p. 6). According to Slavík's research, the construction of the teaching task, based on a delineation of a semantic-syntactic and logical structure of creative concepts, is more or less used as a general didactic model in contemporary Czech art education today. This model forms a dialectic between product and concept, as indicative in the Czech Education Framework for Art and Culture (2006). I take this further to add that it also forms the conceptual, cultural, and mental models of the Czech pre-service students who participated in my study. Thus, the pedagogical model that I used was designed to develop awareness of this structure while developing meta-level experiences to transform it.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH MODEL AND FINDINGS

Participatory/Action Research

Participatory Action Research (PAR) developed out of Lewin's field theory in the social sciences (1946), Habermas' work from the Frankfurt School of critical theory (1971), and Paulo Freire's liberation pedagogy (1970). Lewin's formative influence developing focus groups and action research stemmed from his early field experiments designed to unravel social problems and build theory, work that ultimately led to organizational development applications. *Authentic participation* in knowledge production and social practice as Lewin recommended, requires an understanding of group dynamics - an intricate web of symbolic interactions and forces that affect group structures and individual behavior in them. Critical theory in the social sciences supports the idea of critiquing the historical antecedents of knowledge as it emerges from and is grounded within a context of socio-economic conditions and influences personality development as a force of domination and repression. Critical theory sets the foundation for dialogic relations to be established across disciplinary borders (Habermas, 1971). By comparing aspects of language use within historicized and social spheres, it is possible to 'look at' a contested space in which new discourse will emerge. Used in this manner, critical theory could well be considered a meta-semiotic. Freire believed that a participatory education is one that helps people create a new society by their involvement in constructing their own knowledge through both a language of critique and a language of *possibility*. Freire's work finds contemporaneous correspondences with others such as Horton, Harding, Banks, hooks, Giroux, and Cherryholmes.

When conducting PAR, the field and its dynamics must be attended to. In education, it assumes a partnership and interaction between teaching faculty and teachers in schools. Using this model, I created a partnership between myself and the students, and extended this partnership to a web of teachers in various public school settings of in-school and out-of-school arts education programs in Czech Republic, and on-line with other arts educators in various institutions and countries where we dialogued over various aspects

of visual culture, curriculum concerns, and related theories. This web began as a very large net and narrowed substantially as I worked.

Neonarratives

A qualitative research method of 'neonarratives' (Stewart, 1997) was used. Neonarratives is a narratological approach combining autobiographical data and interview texts, storied within the contemporary world. Narrative discourse is used as a medium of representation for the structuring of knowing in the particular setting of the research interview. The narratives form tools for assembling personal accounts, and it is from these tales that constructed Neonarratives emerge as different stories which represent aspects of contemporary cultural conditions of visual arts and art education." (p. 223)

I adapt the neonarrative qualitative research method as Alexander (1992) and Stewart (1997) define it in order to develop new stories in order to account for the overarching cultural conditions that mediate contemporary art and education teaching and learning. The method addresses the lack of sociological and anthropological perspectives in art education proposals (Stewart, 1997, p. 223) and developed out of a perceived need to develop a qualitative method for perceiving processes of framing in contemporary culture. She cites Lawton's (1975) recommendation for an interdisciplinary mixture of sociological, psychological, and philosophical inquiry for curriculum planning. (Stewart, 1997, p. 224).

In this method, themes identified in the stories of participants verify subjective meaning contained in the text through communicable accounts of common-sense reality. As well, interactions identified among and between themes through these accounts add to notions of the intersubjectivity and wider accessibility of the narrative. (p. 226)

Stewart focuses the narratological approach through interviews to legitimize descriptions of knowledge from researchers and respondents about artistic learning and teaching, I adapted the concept of interview to the use of student reflective writing and questionnaires. I collected autobiographical data by written questionnaires that were completed by students as part of queries accompanying scholarly texts.

For example, in conjunction with excerpts from Addison's (2007) article, *Identity Politics*, I handed out a questionnaire about personal identity which students used as a starting point for exploring how the way they identified themselves influenced how they interacted with visual culture and contemporary art.

Critical/Discourse Analysis

Critical/discourse analysis within semantic practices in education, is a tool for finding the institutional and ideological anchor of certain social practices and cultural models, which constitute meaning and behavior.

Construct-validity and research discourses are shaped, as are other discourses, by beliefs and commitments, explicit ideologies, tacit worldviews, linguistic and cultural systems, politics and economics, and power arrangements. (Cherryholmes, p. 106)

Discourse analysis incorporates the concept that every way of thinking is both premised on and generative of a way of naming that reflects particular underlying convictions (Cook-Sather, 2006). Discourse analysis makes empirical claims rooted in specific viewpoints about the relationship between form and function in language (Gee, 2004). More recently, the term 'critical discourse analysis' used in education, refers to the way in which the form and function of discourses (how and why people say what they do when they interact), are interpreted within the realm of social and cultural practices and how meaning is attributed as well as constituted, within and by such practices (Gee, 2004). Critical discourse analysis moves beyond the analysis of social practice by also including implications within the systems they operate in (Fairclough, 2004).

Situating semiotic and social theory within communication events in education through the analysis of multimodal texts, plays a vital role in the production, reproduction and transformation of the social practices that constitute the societies in which we live. This is a 'critical social semiotic' (Caldas-Coulthard & Van Leeuwen, 2003).

The distribution of dialogic meanings and assumptions, including the power relationships in which they are formed and legitimated by institutional, cultural or social systems, can

be revealed through 'discursive layering' (Fulková, 2005). Discursive layers are excavated through discourse analysis and interpretation of imagery, representations, and visual events. At a meta-level, discursive layers operate as forms of inter-relational processing between sensing, knowing, perceiving, and experiencing the social, cultural, psychological, and political spaces within which individuals interact. Engaging participants with dialogic practices and critically reflecting about experience, helps them inhabit these blended spaces (Fulková & Tipton, 2008).

The following is an example of discursive layering as it is analyzed in a reflective text from a graduate student after experiencing the contemporary art exhibit, AKNE (Galerie Rudolfinum, 2006) through a public event organized with two of its Czech artists there.

A graduate student about her experience at the AKNE exhibition at the Galerie Rudolfinum with two of its Czech artists, Jan Salák and Jakub Hošek [Figure 28]:

Salák is real painter. His work is based on honest craft and he admit(s) it too. His work has contemporary topics, but more personal I think. Jakub Hosek...is much closer to street art and in his later works you can find trace of comics. But even that, these pictures weren't very happy. Their colors were sober and flat with very precise composition. It was maybe because of the special technique, he used some kind of graphic technique. His earlier work was different and I didn't understand it very well. I asked author, how seriously does he take his work and I told him that sometimes I surmise artists, that their work is just a joke, just a fun. That people sometimes look for some meaning even that it doesn't have any. He told me, that usually it's exactly like that.

But it was completely different with Salák's things. It was serious, maybe more intellectual. He explained lot of things about his pictures. His series of nettles was remembrance of the childhood, but the technique was more about formal playing with material. And even though he use plastic and laminate, it was still paint. His second work that was exposed was series or portraits of people dressed in his own battle dress trousers. There were differences between the way how the dresses were painted and the faces of the people. Sometimes it seemed that author was more interested in dresses than in the people. They were his friend(s), but he explained to us, that, on the contrary to his trousers, he doesn't keep them. (HU4, PI5: Švadlenková, 2006)



Figure 28: Milan Salák (2005-6) From the Guerrilla Series. Galerie Rudolfinum (2006)

In the above reflection, several discourses are woven together. One layer expresses interpretations of what the art and the artist *should* do or be like (i.e. talkative, happy, serious, intellectual). Another layer relates to the dynamic happening through the social form of the meeting within the gallery context. Another layer is specific to her interpretation of particular images and relating them to verbal text from the artists. Another layer is a more subtle and somewhat sublime context of issues related to the generation of young Czech artists and their work not being taken seriously (enough) either through rebellion to expected meaning, parody, or joking. This layer is constellated with the name and meaning of the exhibition title, which references anticipated, actual public response to the work, as if a blemish in the local art scene. Reaction to the work by young Czech artists was quite controversial, hence its chosen name, *AKNE* (acne). This later layer is constellated with the socio-cultural and economic context of practicing artists in Czech Republic and the post-1989 erosion of state support for them. There are only two private galleries in Prague, and only one of them represents Czech artists internationally. Yet, when purchases are made, normally individuals and institutions circumvent these galleries and try to make private deals with the artists directly. Without a well-developed and supported infrastructure for distributing and viewing art by Czech artists, there is a disconnect between producing art and making a living from it. Further constellating this discursive layer is contextual information about the exhibition originating from the private collection of a Czech businessman, Richard Adams, who purchased many of the works while the artists were students in art schools. This particular issue appeared at the press conference for the opening of the exhibition as an angry retort that occurred between a reporter and the exhibition's curator over a question related to the Galerie Rudolfinum's 'producing' the Czech artists by their inclusion in the exhibition which resulted in their work increasing in value. The curator response was that 'pure art' had no economic considerations. Ironically, the economic considerations for selecting this particular exhibition at the last minute to fill in for an unexpected cancellation of an exhibition of Japanese manga held by a private German collector, was not mentioned. While curatorial criteria may wish to remain inside an uncluttered space without economics intervening into it, they nevertheless relate to criteria framing the

institutional context being able to experience *which* art exhibitions appear inside its actual space.

Dialogic Inquiry

Dialogue is a form of discourse. Any particular dialogue consists of a variety of discourses. Bohm (1994) drew his meaning of dialogue from the original etymology of the Greek word 'dialogos', interpreting it to mean a 'stream of meaning that flows' across, between, and through two or more people. As a tool for helping participants reveal and understand the system of one's perceptions and thought processes, dialogue is a reflective learning process and a way of giving voice to individual 'felt experience' and knowing. According to Wells (1999), the different functions that speech performs in enabling, interpreting, and evaluating the joint activities of which it is a part, must figure into its analytic framework. Freire adds that:

Knowing for me is not a neutral act, not only from the political point of view, but from the point of view of my body, my sensual body. It is full of feelings, of emotions, of tastes. (Horton & Freire, 1990, p. 23)

Felt experience appears often in verbal and written discourses with students. Dialogue allows for the tacit infrastructure of felt experience as it appears in various discourses, to be revealed in a facilitated setting with others. Moving beyond persuasion and debate in discussion, dialogue uses speech to position stances or roles of group members in relation to one another. It requires the suspension of assumptions and judgments in order to observe the content and process of one's thoughts, as well as to cultivate responsive listening to those of others. Valuing all contributions in the dialogue assists in creating a climate of equality among participants.

Dialogue may begin within an individual as interior self-talk, but requires an externalization in a social process of meaning-making. Jenlink and Banathy (2005), further extend Bohm's definition of dialogue to mean a form of conversation that allows people to connect within and across cultures, forming the basis of inter-subjectivity and cultural creativity.

'Dialogic inquiry' is taken from Wells (1999), where discursive modes are used critically in conjunction with artifacts and action as a 'tool-kit' for meaning-making. For semantic purposes, dialogic inquiry is differentiated from the term, 'dialogic discussion,' used in the Billings and Fitzgerald study (2002) that tied the term to learning teacher-driven subject-based content in mainstream classroom settings.

Dialogic inquiry encompasses a variety of discursive strategies that may not necessarily be tied to traditional classroom practice, in which discussion is intended as a part of a process of meta-level thinking. Drawing upon Foucault's sense of discourse, the term includes all kinds of *énoncés*, such as visual texts, (i.e. drawings, sketches, etc.), using spoken and written text, reflection, experiential learning, and other interactions, combined through group and individual work. According to the intention of the instructional design, the purpose of dialogic inquiry is to establish proprioception about thinking, meaning-making and perception. A pedagogy emphasizing dialogic inquiry reveals the quality of multiple forms and modes of interaction as a vehicle to mediate knowledge re/construction and create new discourse/s.

Transcribing a dialogic event solely in terms of speech, however, makes univocal what is (con)textual to emotion, body language, non-verbal cues from others, non-representational experiencing, unspoken thoughts, and the environmental factors within any given situation. Taxonomies of kinds of speech that transpire during dialogic events are maps of verbal cues, but do not account for what interpretation is being given to the speech act itself, where meaning is embedded with various levels and kinds of discourses. Context cannot be assumed as given or it becomes a fixed variable treated reflexively as 'text' instead of an interaction between a complex set of relationships and factors. Dialogic and semiotic practice cannot be used to oversimplify this complexity with set interpretations that students are guided to reveal. "Transcognition is a process wherein the individual and others are parallel and necessary agents of mind that inform each other through imaginative thinking strategies such as problem-solving, metaphoric association, and critical reflection" (Sullivan, 2002, p. 27).

The purpose of engaging in dialogic inquiry and discourse analysis is to develop awareness about the process of sensing, thinking and interpretation, and how together they mediate the meaning attributed to imagery, representations, and the experience of visual encounters.

Reflective Practice

Examining the material process of thought as an outside observer (thought of others) or as an inside observer (thought of oneself) as well as in relation to others (group thought processes) becomes a part of any system of reflective practice and critical analysis. This is accomplished by the reflective writing after dialogic inquiry, providing space for what was not said or understood at the time of the dialogic event and giving space for more thinking time about what was said. Creating a culture of thinking time, according to Perkins (1994) cultivates a dialogue with oneself that allows what he calls *experiential intelligence* to make intuitive connections (p. 42)³. This appears in Melanen's final reflection:

It was interesting to notice the process, how the thoughts and opinions changed first from the notes, then when discussing and finally afterwards writing reflection. It was a challenge to sharpen, tighten, explain and define my thoughts in the reflection. The reflections were quite hard to write in the beginning, depending on the writing in a foreign language and inexperience. Gradually writing was easier, when you get the touch to the writing and learn more vocabulary. These are very important and essential skills for the future. (HU2, P6: Melanen, 2006)

Shoen's (1993) model of the reflective practitioner differentiates between three stages of effective reflective practice: 'reflection in action', 'reflection on action', and 'meta-reflection'. This cycle moves from intuitive knowing, replaying the 'action' for analytical insight, and a meta-level 'reflecting on reflecting'. While Shoen's model was meant for those in leadership roles, it is possible to adapt the same aspects for students by asking for reflection in the three areas of an experience I previously discussed: what stands out, why is this important, and how will I use it? The first area is often the focus of reflection and the last area is often completely left out. I add artistic practice and creative play to

any critical, interpretive process so that students and teachers of art engage, reflect, explore, and produce their reflections and interpretations in non-verbal ways, as well as spoken, written, and interactive ones.

Walker (2006)'s use of Lacanian registers with reflective practice as a tool for revealing subjectivity with university-level students is another model from a different semiotic domain. Stage theory however, requires shared agreements in the definition of terms, its dimensions and levels, and interpretation of the word 'real.' Drawing upon cognitive science, brain research, and perceptual studies, Narby concludes, "We never see reality, but only an internal representation of it that our brain constructs for us continuously" (p. 105).

Using Lacan's 'real, mirror and imaginative' stage theory with students, leads Walker to this observation.

Through sustained reflection and dialogue, there is the possibility for developing an understanding of the paradoxical oppositions that can arise in one's reaction to imagery. While it is impossible to achieve direct, unmediated access to the unconscious, one can engage with the effects of their unconscious drives by exploring the affective reactions and contradictory impulses that shape responses to imagery. Further, by introducing previously unsymbolizable affects and tensions into the symbolic order through dialogue or images, a student's sense of their subjectivity might begin to exceed and even fracture restrictively coded subject positions that limit or oppress agency (p. 318).

Using various reflective practices and activities related to visual encounters, provides the opportunity for multiple interpretive frameworks for students to interact with. Role plays, narrative work, queries, and triangulating an experience through a critical reading of a particular text, can be used to vary the way in which reflective practice is engaged. Once reflective practice is assimilated into group functioning, it operates as a lens through which the group and individuals in the group can *see* themselves - i.e. how they think, how they are drawn towards or away from certain representations, and what they mean to the individuals and the group. As Melanen explains:

I think that the biggest influence (was) our dialogues, after viewing the exhibition it was pleasing to sit down and talk about everything that came in to our minds. It was interesting to see and hear how the exhibitions influenced us different ways.

Usually visiting exhibitions with my friends the conversations afterwards stays in the same level, thoughts, feelings, describing, which is interesting too. But now it was great to have an expert explain and enlighten different matters and methods and ask apt questions. (HU2, P6: Melanen, 2006)

Impress-ion

The following case study example illustrates 'stages' of the reflection process in situ in the Galerie Rudolfinum's exhibition (2005-6), *The Origin of Beauty – The Power of Vision*. The gallery poster advertised the exhibition as *Impresse* (Impression) [Figure 29].

Using the combination of dialogic inquiry and reflective writing in situ, revealed an immediate relationship between thinking, perception, and experience. This kind of writing task has a different quality than reflective writing completed afterwards and returned next session. Both kinds of reflective practice are tools that provide a lens of the



Figure 29: Poster for exhibit. Galerie Rudolfinum (2005)

individual's thinking process in response to imposed time limitations that can be seen in relation to what becomes emphasized with more thinking and reflecting time. The following excerpts are taken from masters and doctoral-level students who are art majors with the in situ writing practice.

During a two hour seminar session, a graduating Czech masters' student reflects in situ about what stands out from the encounter (HU1):

For me it's very interesting to see a people from a different country [primitive community] to see their own rituals, the environment, their needs, habit and so on. It's also interesting to know that those people exist on our planet. They are not touched by modern civilization. They don't even know that we exist. It's something what impress me. Actually they are the same human beings like us, but they were just born to the different world place. I think they do have an open mind for spiritual thinking; their thinking is not blocked by our technology and so on. I can feel the free open mind and kind of virginity from the picture (HU1: Priblova, 2006).

In the first encounter, the student focuses her observation solely in terms of her

impressions about a particular work of art, the subject of which were photographs from a community in Indonesia which she classifies as 'primitive.' After a second session at the same exhibition, she writes this self-reflection in situ:

It was very interesting for me to go to the gallery and listen to the others' opinions about the art and pictures in the gallery. For example, the first room what we visited was great (the talking, opinions, art and so on). I realize that all of us are coming from different environment and background and of course we do have a different opinion. The girl who said that the photo, 'Ritual II' - what I have been chosen already before (1st visit) is a cheap trick, really awoke me, because I didn't even think how the artist took the picture. It wasn't important to me. The photo talked to me through spirit of the place where have been taken. The picture magnetized me somehow. No idea why? Probably because we are too different from each other's thoughts, interest, past, present, future, etc. It's great to observe how art talk to spectator and how spectator read the art. I can't say that some opinions are wrong and some right. Every opinion of spectator has a special meaning for the interpreter... Now I know that this subject can help me to find out a new way of my thinking and also the skills what I will get during the class I can apply to my own teaching career. (HU1: Příbylová, 2006)

From the second encounter, she speaks more about the process of the dialogue itself and how it affects her thinking. A comment from another student provokes her to reflect more deeply about the observation of artistic trickery and what it means to her. She is using the suggestion of the three-step model of reflection by drawing her insights back to her teaching practice. From her ensuing insights, it is possible to see how a reflective process begins to be deepened over time with exposure and practice.

Reflecting afterwards, a Czech doctoral student writes,

Shared dialogue and especially your commenting and referring the objects, was very interesting, where each of us had something to tell. For me this was the most comfortable lesson. Comparing to previous ones, it didn't give me new systematic/methodic tool for perceiving art, but introduce me to one trend in contemporary art and idea of experiencing art as a creative process, comparable to producing it. (HU1, P6: Elfmarková, 2007)

In contrast, is this excerpt in situ about the same encounter from a Czech doctoral student after the first visit:

I feel a big huge [gap] before my perceiving art objects and this presentation in academic discourse, monographs, papers about exhibition. I'm unable to combine both. If I move in this 'professional' discourse my perceiving is empty. The relation between me and the object doesn't exist (HU1, Novotná, 2007).

Here, the student finds the academic discourse a barrier to her experience of the art. In additional reflective writing, she questions and answers her own criteria for connecting to the 'impression' that works of art evoke within herself. This excerpt clearly describes what can be her bridge to finding a personal relationship to the art itself.

My beauty is not necessarily your beauty (postmodern paradigm). Something is beautiful for me not when I really understand the content, but when I'm able to find some content understandable for me. (HU1, Novotná 2007)

This particular comment was provoked while passing out of one of the rooms of the exhibition and stopping to look into backlit sculptures of giant sea creatures when I said, "How beautiful." Her response is directed towards that comment, expressing her rejection of that sentiment and why. By reacting to the impact of the readings and the dialogue, she is able to redefine her relationship to the traditional academic model, and shifts it to her own 'standpoint.' Reading her reflection also shifted my standpoint to be aware of objectifying speech and 'teacher' discourses that may have been normative at a particular but abstract level, yet were experientially empty. This example also illustrates how text analysis alone is insufficient without drawing its relational 'con/text' into a wider set of variables that cannot be represented solely by coding text passages to themselves, as in the *Atlas.ti* software analysis.

The above examples illustrate how the dialogic inquiry and reflective practice work together as a polysemic during a visual encounter with contemporary art that operates also in relationship to my standpoint as part of that encounter.

Meta-Cognition

Becoming aware of the act of knowing and how knowing transpires, is a process Freire refers to as the *gnosiological cycle* (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 7). According to Freire, the gnosiological cycle is made up of two distinct forms of knowing, one that occurs when knowledge is produced and the second when we are aware of what is produced.

What happens generally is that we dichotomize these moments; we make them separate. Knowledge is produced in a place far from the students, who are asked

only to memorize what the teacher says. Consequently, we reduce the act of *knowing* the existing knowledge into a mere *transference* of the existing knowledge (p. 8).

Awareness of this cycle is cultivated not only in ourselves, but also in others as each person speaks and is listened to. There is a circulation of energy that occurs between people that can be amplified, short-circuited or deadened, depending on how the process is attended to. Each person can help give voice to others by opening up and revealing their own process of *knowing*.

Changing the context and nature of the learning environment and being more creative with what is allowed to transpire in there, restructures established teacher-student roles and relationships by changing their configuration and relational components of each other in them, as Knight, Keifer-Boyd, and Amburgy (2004) found. After participating in arranging the classroom space together for the Critical Approaches class, one participant reflects about this article in relation to how the learning event has been arranged:

...what happens when you break the 'normal' way of having a lecture. It seems that it's easier to break student/ teacher roles when there's not so obvious setting of who is the leader and who should follow. It helps all participants open up a little and use their imagination. They might feel it easier to say their first impressions and thoughts comparing to situation when they (students) just wait to hear the right answers (HU5, P28: Lindstrom, 2007).

As new forms of research and research paradigms shift the understanding of both Participant and observer to an integral position, historical theories of art and the psychology of art are re-contextualized. An important aspect of re-contextualization and the widening of the interactional factors of relationships involved in the psychology of perception extends the concept of mediation inclusive of other elements.

The purpose of engaging in dialogic inquiry and critical discourse analysis in the realm of arts education is to develop meta-awareness about the process of perception, thinking and interpretation, and how together they mediate the construction of meaning attributed to visual encounters. Seen at a meta-level, all representations 'in'-form us – that is, they both encapsulate a way in which 'knowing' is understood (in 'form'), and simultaneously

act on the development of cognitive structures within which such knowing operates ((per)-form 'in').

Participants and Setting

Participants in the study included four groups of mixed-level student/teachers (15) from under/graduate programs enrolled in courses or programs within the Pedagogical Faculty in the Department of Art Education and Art History Department at Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic who participated in elective seminars with me between 2005 and 2008. Study participants included exchange students from European universities in the Socrates and Erasmus programs together with masters' and doctoral students from Charles University. All of the Czech doctoral students either were practicing art teachers or had recently been, whereas for the most part, the European exchange students were preparing for their practicum student teaching experiences in art when they returned or were finishing exams and preparing to teach and/or continue their studies. Of the 15 students at Charles University who participated and are included in the data sample, seven are from European Universities (2 Denmark; 3 Finland; 1 Germany; 1 France) and eight from Czech Republic.

Four semester-long seminars included, *Professional Terminology in the Field: Art History as Inquiry for doctoral students* (HU1); *Viewing Contemporary Art and Visual Culture* (HU2), *A Semiotic Reading of Advertising Imagery* (HU4), and *Critical Approaches to Visual Culture and Contemporary Art* (HU5). My pre-service sample includes reflective writing from two, three-hour sessions with 13 undergraduate students in a Visual Culture teacher training program at the University of Central Bohemia in Plzeň, Czech Republic (HU3).

In addition, seven groups (total = 108) of first year, second year and seminar level high school students enrolled in art courses from Gymnasium Na Zatlance and their teacher, Dr. Lenka Kitzbergová, participated in two 60-90-minute sessions at the Galerie

Rudolfinum's, *Uncertain States of America* exhibition. I made two follow-up visits to their high school classroom afterwards (HU6).

Context of Researcher Standpoint

Gailbraith (1993) encourages educators to examine their own pedagogy. While my pedagogical orientation did not emerge out of the local context of Czech Republic, it adapted to it. In the past twenty-five years, I have trained and worked at all levels of education from pre-school to tertiary education, including arts education teaching, artist-in-residencies, curriculum design and program revision; outcome assessment, and school administration in positions as curriculum specialist, consultant, and director. Prior to this, I trained as a studio artist in printmaking and photography. In the past ten years, I have worked outside of the United States as an elementary arts educator in Africa, China and school director in Czech Republic.

While my early educational practice developed prior to the widespread implementation and use of DBAE, my pedagogical experience reflects its training and the cultural system of visual arts education in the USA. Within the cultural context and milieu of visual arts education in Czech Republic, DBAE is known but virtually unutilized. I found myself in the position of adapting by background and experience to the local context, which in turn, adapted me.

It should be noted that my presence was something outside of the norm for the Pedagogical Faculty and the Department of Arts Education. Adapting to my (sole) proficiency in English was problematic and while my methods and approach to pedagogy and curriculum were known, practically speaking, they were still uncommon. The use of collaborative group work and dialogic inquiry in classrooms are not new theoretically but at the tertiary level are not commonly practiced. While both pedagogies exist in certain courses and departments, they are not consistently implemented across all instructional levels. Thus, some Czech students had prior collaborative group experience, whereas all visiting students from European universities were well-acquainted with it. Some Czech

students were interested and willing to participate in dialogic methods of communication but underwent a learning process to feel comfortable with co-inhabiting a space they normally reserved for the lector. The use of the word lector is thus quite literal and formed a set of expectations that at the beginning of my sessions were in direct conflict with my own expectations for student participation. Most students from other European universities had had some kind of reflective writing experience, but none of the Czech students were familiar with using it. None of the 15 student participants had ever used reflective writing as a vehicle to think about their own thinking in regards to the experience of each seminar session.

In 2005 when I began teaching seminars in the Department, there was only one person who had proficiency in English to read scholarly texts. Thus, I stopped handing them out. For the most part, few of the writers I was using had been translated into Czech. The first theorist that we held in common understanding was Foucault. As access to international databases and current print materials in arts education in English were not easily available, under these conditions, on-line database searching for international and national texts was very limited and was not a common research activity, even though it was an expectation. I had my first cross-cultural experience when I was introduced to the department librarian filing what looked like a small, mimeographed copy of a text that she replaced into a glass case. The other cases like it appeared to be full of the same mimeographs, and were stacked one on top of another along one wall in a narrow room no larger than a small storage room. Thus, in my first seminar with students, the departmental expectation was that I would improve English skills in order for students to be able to produce and present their own papers in English at professional conferences, (which occurred two years later at the InSEA Conference in Karlsruhe, Germany in 2007). But when I arrived, few students could participate at the level of English I was using. Nor were they participating in the activities I designed. After introducing the course and giving an overview, I had reflective pair work; small group discussions in the 'jigsaw' design around questions related to art history as inquiry; large group discussion; a cooperative learning activity to create a historical timeline of art images from non-western and marginalized groups whose images were not normally included in traditional

art history categories, and group discussion about the results, observations, and reflections. The activity was designed to make obvious the situation in which art history has left us with today - that certain people and cultural groups across time and place have been excluded from participating and being designated in 'official' art history.

Hajdušková's journal notes:

We had a little trouble with symbolism, it was difficult for us to place it in to the line, we didn't recognize the characteristics of this style, it was also difficult to place copies of not-European arts, we also discuss about symbolism in all kinds of art, that every piece of art uses some wildcard symbols to tell us its story, and it depends [on] how many symbols we do understand, if we can see and read them.
(HU1: P1: Hajdušková, 2006)

The situation in the first seminar was astutely commented on by one of the doctoral students:

Teresa, you cannot imagine how difficult the class was. Now I think you understand it, but that time you seemed to me also partly confused - you came to teach into the class where, I guess, you were prepared to discuss art stuff on certain level, but factually you came to a class where almost no (one) was able to understand, or even review or analyze and comment it...I didn't know what to expect, but the result of the first class was more than confusing for me. When (I) retrospect it today, your intention and prepared work were interesting - you introduced us [to a] new perspective of thinking of art and art history...On the other hand I felt for you because the situation seemed to be unpleasant for you, too.
(HU1, P6: Elfmárková, 2006)

There was a period of adjustment to reach shared agreements and transpose different assumptions between individuals as well as education systems. As Novotná shared, "It is not just what the teacher is doing. The student must see the need for his/her participation" (personal communication, February 14, 2007). At the same time, within the dialogic process, it is important to be committed to a process of engagement with the uncertainty that arises. Hajdušková's journal entry for the first class makes an important observation from the query:

Can Art content be separated from its context (worked in small groups)?

What is content? For example: theme of painting, and content could be authors and also interpreters. What is context? Is that (a) wider view, (a) kind of layering system: author, name of piece, place in kinds of art, place in time? We think it shouldn't be separated, because then it loses its logic. But we think that in many situations it is separated: in school when explaining some artifact, or just something

about it. It is difficult to say, I think we don't use the correct words; it is quite a philosophical question. (HU1: P1: Hajdušková, 2006)

The process works best when both teaching and learning sides are congruent with the same expectations and goals. Thus, while students would read and agree to course terms and expectations as outlined in syllabi, it was a difficult set of competencies to enact.

About this difference, Elfmarková notes:

I see one more thing/difference in it - Czech and American attitude to team work, open discussions and sharing opinions. Czech nature is fairly individualistic, we are also not 'zealous' [for] every activity - to involve us represent[s a] certain difficulty and patience. (HU1, P6: Elfmarková, 2006)

After struggling to find my way into this new territory, I was walking up the stairs one day several months later with a colleague who shared with me, "Only now do I understand what you are doing" (HU4, Novotná, personal communication, 2006). This was a decisive turning point for me to find the balanced meeting point across the cultural divide. Thus, each seminar I taught helped me adapt to the local, educational context as much as the local participants adapted to me. Within a co-constructive reciprocity, we found mutual collaboration and learning together. An example was evidenced by the surprise another former doctoral student and educator at the Veletržní Palác showed while arranging a visit for us there. When I referred to my students as 'colleagues', she responded:

I didn't know that students are my colleagues :-) – PhD. students, it's good to know, I will design a new structure of lesson for them (Bara Skaloudová, personal communication, 14 November 2007).

Shifting out of fixed conceptions is not just on the learner side, as educators sometimes erroneously emphasize. When given the freedom to experiment without punishment or dismissal, ideas and practice become a learning laboratory where teachers and students meet each other; where they grow into something they may have only conceived of, but must experience together. Thus, we found ourselves the adage, no one person knows everything, but together we are *knowing*. As Malek (2007) reflected:

I felt there was a collegial relationship, except the time you spoke for approximately 40 minutes in the lecture. I think I (remember) 20% of what you said. But I remember several sentences and assertions which were important for me. Additional to the other works, like reflective writing, practices, theory and

exhibitions; your teaching speeches were as necessary and supplementary as the other parts (HU5, P14: Malek, 2007).

Pedagogical Design

Over the course of the study between 2005 and 2008, graduate and undergraduate students with proficiency in English as a second language self-selected their participation in my seminars and presentations. Group instructional sessions took place in classrooms of the Department of Art Education in Prague and in the Visual Culture Studies program in Plzeň. Three types of classrooms were assigned for my work: one for lecture presentations with rows of tables, a large overhead video project, screen and computer; a classroom for studio art; and a computer lab. Many sessions also took place inside community galleries and museums, with exhibitions selected according on the course and the stated interests and intentions of the students.

After teaching my first seminar (2005-6), I changed the bi-weekly design to a weekly one to accommodate the need to progress in English proficiency and adapt the content to my research intention. Because only two students from ten in the first seminar turned in reflecting writing (one of which was handed in six months after the class was over), I made reflective writing a requirement to be sent electronically prior to the next session. I left the content and form open but gave a recommendation for a three query format adapted from New Horizons for Learning: *what stands out for you from the experience, why is this important to you, and how will you use it?* I gave feedback when the reflection mimicked teacher voice through class notes, and did not reflect individual points of view and queries. Over the four seminars in the Department, I came to see the reflective writing as a process of learning how to communicate ideas in this particular format that was constructed individually. From my own reflective writing during this time, I muse that, “perhaps f-acts are overrated fragments.”

The pedagogical design model culminates in my final seminar (2007-2008), *Critical Approaches to Visual Culture and Contemporary Art* with ten under/graduate students, two of whom did not complete the course. In keeping with the constructivist approach,

my pedagogical design modified in tandem to the abilities and interests of students intersecting with mine. I added texts for critical reading to accompany visits to galleries with contemporary art exhibits or media presentations that were selected in tandem with issues and questions raised during collaborative dialogues and weekly student reflective writings and art assignments. As such, I started without a required reading list, selecting texts as we went. My own verbal contributions were focused on the critical readings and elaborating contextual factors for encounters with contemporary art, framing them within the various interpretive lenses of critical theory, semiosis and proprioception. According to the quality and content of the reflective writing that I was receiving each week from students and their questions, confusion or even theoretical misunderstandings, my own dialogical and theoretical positions emphasized various aspects of these concerns. In this way, the design proceeded constructively according to weekly, situated practice as a living circulation between the elements of design and implementation, theory and practice, student and teacher as collaborative participants, generating a community of learning and practice together. This approach moves from the 'text' of one's life to its 'text/ure'.

As my work developed within a semiotic co-constructivism, over the course of data collection, my research emphasis shifted from focusing on the impact of a semiotic approach to visual culture pedagogy per se as I had conceived it when I first began my doctoral research, to how under/graduate students and teachers of art in pedagogical courses processed the pedagogical encounters through the evidence of their own spoken and written narrative discourses.

While I taught four seminars and drew samples from all of them, it is the last seminar, *Critical Approaches to Visual Culture and Contemporary Art*, that encapsulated the data sample. As this was the last of my seminars, by this time I had refined my ideas and approach to teaching visual culture during a time when it also fortuitously coincided with the *Uncertain States of America* exhibition at the Rudolfinum. This diverse exhibition of contemporary art in America became a semiotic vehicle for many of my own ideas and a laboratory for the research in how students interpret visual culture/s through their own

coding systems. For this reason, I extended my data sample to include Czech high school students participating at this exhibition.

Data Collection

The pedagogical model was field-tested with four, (mixed) university-level groups, as previously mentioned, over the course of one semester each in the Department of Art Education. From these groups, I collected data from student/teacher self-report instruments such as questionnaires, worksheets, reflective writing, and self-assessments; field notes from dialogue in seminars and during excursions to galleries in Prague; action research as a reflective practitioner, and visual data from contemporary exhibitions and media, digital photographs, video, and student artwork.

My data was extended with a fifth group from two, three-hour seminars with a group of Visual Culture students at the University of Western Bohemia in Plzeň (2006) [Figure 30:]. My seminars included discussion of PowerPoint presentations of visual culture images, written reflections and an art activity during the first seminar.



Figure 30: Student project in Plzeň. Tipton (2006)

Discussion of images from the AKNE art exhibition of Czech contemporary art at the Galerie Rudolfinum, with written responses to questions and reflections, and a choice of an individual or group art project representing how the seminars impacted them followed. [Figure 31]

I collected self-assessments from both groups (HU4).

I also collected questionnaires (108), visual documentation and field observations with seven groups of first and second year art students from a local, Czech high school during two, 60-90 minute sessions at the



Figure 31: Finished art, Plzeň. Tipton (2006)

Galerie Rudolfinum exhibition, *Uncertain States of America* (2007-2008).

In addition, I collected field notes and visual documentation in two, follow-up visits to four high school art classes who were working with the educational materials produced for the exhibition (Fulková, Kitzbergová and Tipton, 2007) [Figure 32].

As anecdotal and contextual data, I collected field observations and visual documentation from Dr. Marie Fulková's training sessions with Czech teachers of art at the Galerie Rudolfinum and from two workshops by the



Figure 32: *Uncertain States of America* artwork, Kitzbergová's students. Tipton (2008)

Pedagogical Faculty at Charles University for local art teachers (2006 and 2007) [Figures 33]

Data Analysis

Descriptive interpretation is utilized in the development of analytic generalizations from inferences from the content and coding analysis of the data sample. Textual analysis from the structuralist framework of the *Atlas.ti* qualitative research software was an initial



Figure 33: *Tomato Teacher Training Workshop*, Galerie Rudolfinum. Tipton (2006)

framework that was contextualized by relating text samples to researcher field notes, dialogic notes, visual anthropology, such as artwork, photographic documentation and media, and collegial conversations and emails between researcher and students.

Reflective writing samples from participants were coded according to an initial content analysis, revealing types and patterns of discourses, and meta-cognitions that function as

a set of neo-narratives. How students relate to neo-narratives (Stewart, 1997) from contemporary art – and create their own – is a site for new pedagogy, moving contemporary art from the periphery of visual art education practice to its cultural center. In reflective writing, individual themes present themselves through the dialogic process by the selection and use of language, individual queries, and commentaries. Patterns can be seen within texts according to individuals as well as across groups. While themes emerge in tandem with course content, they also bear their own individuality. In this analysis, the interpretation circulates between critical and active inquiry, critical theories, discourses from dialogic and reflective practice, and researcher interpretation of participant self-reports and field notes. Internal validity focuses on demonstrating the relationship between two or more factors: between the practice of dialogic inquiry, reflective writing, and visual anthropology which included the context of visual culture encounters.

Coding Analysis

I sorted the data sample into seven hermeneutic units according to the *Atlas.ti* software structure, using critical discourse analysis with selected texts and develop case study examples of the narrative process of four students: Černochová, Malek, Lindstrom, and Del Priore, who participated in my last seminar. Černochová participated in two seminars. While the study includes material from the other students and all four seminars at Charles University and one at UCB, Plzeň (HU1-5), the findings are focused from last seminar (HU5). Galerie Rudolfinum experiences (HU6-7) complete the study.

Part of the text-based research sample includes 100 documents of student reflective writing, analyzed in an open-coding method according to grounded theory. Qualitative data analysis with *Atlas.ti* software helped generate a frequency distribution of codes and associate them with corresponding text passages from the sample of primary documents. Five units of pre-service student reflective writings were analyzed in this way.

An initial content analysis of HU5: *Critical Approaches to Visual Culture and Contemporary Art*, yielded a preliminary set of 106 codes that were identified in student

texts, and 34 codes of highest frequency (10+) were selected according to their correspondence with the research questions:

Aesthetic experience (20)	Always (25)	Approach (25)	Associations (20)	Beauty (27)
Change (23)	Collect (25)	Context (22)	Different (57)	Difficult (14)
Discussion (19)	Effect (14)	Experience (74)	Express (30)	Feeling (43)
Have to (31)	Identity (43)	Individual criteria (17)	Influence (24)	Knowledge (25)
Make (74)	Maybe (49)	Message (13)	Personal (17)	Place (32)
Possible 18)	Process (44)	Reflective choice (25)	Should (36)	Sign (38)
Story (27)	Thinking (42)	Understand it (30)	Value (23)	

I associated the frequency of codes and linked text passages called ‘quotations’ in the *Atlas.ti* software program, with relevant concepts and phrases from the texts. These in turn were linked with ‘texts’ from critical readings, visual ethnography, and researcher reflective writings from action research. Coding networks were developed by linking codes to other codes and creating symbol maps. Supercodes are queries that are made from codes. From this process the following supercodes were identified in HU5: *create the context, structure of influence, process of identity, network of relationships, putting it all together, see the value, something that escapes, and ways of thinking.*

While material from HU5 alone could have been selected to represent the data sample, I decided to import the full coding list in *Atlas.ti* from HU5 into the other pre-service units (HU1-4) and see how these codes stood up to a second content analysis. But because HU1 was an incomplete unit with three out of ten students who submitted at least one reflective writing piece and only two students who completed the final project, I initially chose not to use it. From the second content analysis, the total number of codes increased to 116 and eleven codes appeared in frequency across four, pre-service student units (HU2-5) – *beauty, change, different, influence, information, open, structure, understand (it), sense, should, and sign.*

In the third content analysis, I decide to experiment and test how the above 11 codes stood up to the codes in HU1. Three codes appeared significantly through all five units (HU1-5): *change, different, and should.* It revealed to me that even though the content of HU1 was not structured as the other pre-service seminars, there were similar themes in the discourses related to difference, authority, and change. I believe this is related to the

fact that of the ten doctoral students in the HU1 seminar, all but one were or had been practicing art teachers. Thus, the pre-service discourses were consistent and I include quotations from students corresponding to these three codes. Instead, I focus on the findings from units HU2-5. HU6, on the other hand, is from high school questionnaires and remains in narrative form and I did not analyze it by *Atlas.ti* per se. Like HU1, it figures into the critical discourse analysis and neo-narrative structure by annotations from manual coding. I draw upon relevant discourses from other units as they build upon a process of which they are a smaller part.

Using the language from student texts, I identify ten supercode networks from the CDA of HU2-5 and their corresponding codes: *identity politics*; *beauty's necessary presence?*; *revealing power relations, structure of influence*; *between these two wantings*; *something that escapes*; *reorders the space*; *making connections*; *sculptural presence*; and *network of relationships*.

Six major types of discourses were synthesized from the process of relating the (11) highest frequency codes and supercode networks together: *cultural self-location*, *power relationships*, *conjectural*, *palimpsestic*, *transposition*, and *professionalizing narrative*. [note: As previously cited, Kristeva's adoption of Lacan's social discourses into four signifying practices: narrative, contemplation, text-practice and meta-language, can all be seen within the types of student discourses as well: self-location=*narrative*; conjecture=*contemplation*; palimpsestic=*text-practice*; and meta language=*transposition*.]

Using a grounded theory approach to the critical data analysis, I draw these findings back to examining text indicators of a semiotic, proprioception of thinking in critical reflection, and discourses of self-reported impacts of perceptions, experiences, cognitions and artistic practice. Grounding the data analysis with the qualitative software, *Atlas.ti*, alternated inductively and deductively analyzing and interpreting comparisons with existing theory and researcher observations. But what also emerged in this process was the awareness of trans-cognition as a meta-level circulation between all of these

elements. As previously cited, trans-cognition is an awareness that emerges from group interaction. This is a form of knowing that was greater than my own processes. By reviewing the texts again and again, reflecting upon them, recreating the sessions in mind with my own reflective writing, there was an emergence of shared perception that cannot be attributed solely to me alone.

While it is possible to code visual data along with text data in *Atlas.ti*, it does so by coding images as text through a content analysis, which I did not find useful for non-lingual denotations. *Atlas.ti*'s limitation is that the structural relationship in-between data 'text' fragments and their codes cannot account for relationships between these codes and contextual information that surrounded dialogic exchanges that do not appear in writing from students, such as non-verbal signs, visual anthropology, and researcher field notes which I did not code together with the student samples. At the same time, as a qualitative tool, *Atlas.ti* is advantageous for coding analysis of large amounts of data and provides a Boolean framework for developing symbol maps of coding networks that may not be immediately apparent otherwise. In this sense, the initial code-to-code networks that I created with its drawing tools confirmed for me that the word, "constellation" that I had chosen to represent the dialogic process, was quite literal. The symbol maps appeared as open or closed symbols, depending on how I structured them with the Boolean options. At the same time, without understanding the symbols, those who are unfamiliar with *Atlas.ti* cannot easily read them. Thus, I chose to not include them here.

I have chosen instead text samples from students that are based on self-report. I chose to highlight the process of personal meaning-making in relationship to the events in the seminar. I was interested to illustrate the interrelated form between thinking, inquiry, and understanding within the social construction of knowledge. Many quotations had multiple codings, confirming the view that all signs exist within multiple systems of relationship formation. The need to 'prove' the validity of qualitative data, is thus still quite interrelated to the researcher's continual and ongoing standpoint. Critical discourse analysis is the chosen tool for analytic narrative triangulating and connecting analytic Processes with relevant critical and social theories.

To illustrate the above process, I have included a table [Table 1] summarizing the initial full coding to supercode structure and discourse relationship from the HU5 unit, *Critical Approaches to Visual Culture and Contemporary Art* (2007).

Table 1. Coding and Supercoding Structure of Data Analysis

TYPES OF DISCOURSES	SUPERCODES	CODES
Cultural self-location	Identity Politics	Conscious Creates Attention Create the Context Different Difficulties to Understand Experience Identity Individual Criteria Individual Interpretation In Her Own Way Personality Place Process of Identity Provoke Sensuous Story Subjectivity Touches
	Beauty's Necessary Presence?	Aesthetic experience Beauty Collect Code Effect Establishing a Relationship Feeling Feminine Way Fixated Influence Intention Outsider Personal Personality Role Sense Senses Sensuous Sign
	Revealing Power Relations	Distinguish Expectation Interrogate Information Provoke
Power Relationships	Structure of Influence	Always Change Our Opinion Context Freedom Have To Judge Knowledge Manipulation of Perception Official Outside Power Reaction

		Recognize Role Should Strong Thinking Value
Conjecture	Between These Two Wantings	Circulation Difficult Impact I Think I See Maybe Probably Understand It
	Something That Escapes	The Art Is Broken Apart by Discussion Confusing Fear Hard to Explain It Losing Their Meaning Not being able to
Palimpsestic	Reorders the Space	Associations Beauty Change Difference Intertextual Ironic Imitation Principle of Relationship References Trigger
Transposition	Making Connections	All of a Sudden Fascinating Finding Ironic Message Point of View Possibility Process Putting It Together Relevance Thread
	Sculptural Presence	Creativity Effect Essence Make Open Presence Space
Professionalizing	Network of Relationships	Approach Challenging Motivation New Purpose Possible Practice the Consciousness Purpose Reflective Choice Self-Development Tool

Supercode Examples

The following section gives examples of these interconnected coding networks.

Identity Politics

Identity Politics is a constellation of cultural self-location discourses, examining personal beliefs, values, and opinions in context to an awareness of relationship, impact, or inter-subjectivity. Cultural self-location extends beyond autonomy or self-determination to related political, economic, historical, socio-cultural, gender, and multicultural factors. Identity, which may at first appear fixed to the participant but which unfolds relationally in various forms and networks, is approached according to one's self-perception and experiential sub-cultures. From a session in the seminar, *A Semiotic Reading of Advertising*, post-graduate student Černochová reflects,

Everybody is a constructed identity, the teachers as well. Today it is very popular to bring new impulses from abroad, from other countries, cultures, continents... It is in the area of food, sports, spirituality..... It can be helpful. But I think that today's children (and not only children) don't know well enough their own space, from which they come from. By meeting another culture, we can be enthusiastic about the new, original, clear view [of] the problem. We have enough distance to see the most essential features. But as foreigners we cannot see all the ways these identities were constructed. The best space, in which we can observe these structures, is our own culture, our own home environment. I want only to say, maybe a bit too complicated, that we should first know, who we are, before we start trying to become someone else. Maybe it sounds xenophobic. But I hope it isn't. And I think it doesn't exclude the learning in spirals, coming back to the problems and re-constructing the nets in peoples' minds (HU5, P48: Černochová, 2007).

Identity as a construction is queried here in relationship to 'foreigners' and culture is queried in terms of 'place.' Huber (2007) examines the concept of place in relationship to her body, creating photographic and video studies and intentionally working with the feeling of alienation [Figure 34].

I tried to alienate my body, which I just captured by the previously elucidated body studies...I painted myself with kohl and was observing myself in the mirror until I felt like having a stranger in front of me. (HU5, Huber PowerPoint, 2007)



Figure 34: Carolin Huber (2007) Alienation. Huber (2007)

Culture as it is contextually present as sets of social practices within which less materialized ideas, attitudes, beliefs and values function, is initially harder for them to discern. Trying to answer the question what shaped her self-concept, Malek writes,

My relationships are my personal insurance which allows me to go far away (from the people I love)

without being alone. One of my constructions is the triangle of me, you and us. I always try to find a balance between the positions. Relationships are very important for me. I like the behavior which consists of trusting each other. I like to think about my thoughts. I try to do what I feel. This means development for me. I'm honest. I want to effect something positive in life. (HU5, P71: Malek, 2007)

Malek wrote this at the beginning of the seminar as part of her own statement, 'identity politics', and was consistent throughout the other writings she did.

Emphasizing how national discourses make foreigners into a set of 'others' through beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, social practices, and values adopted by the individual, students explored their identification with various national communities. About her national identity as a German, Malek selected an image of the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin and writes [Figure 35]:

I choose a picture of the holocaust- monument in Berlin, which... helps to memorize and inform what happened during the Second World War to Jewish people. A special thing about this monument is that the names of the approximately 6 million Jews who died are used for this project. I choose this picture because of a few reasons.



Figure 35: Detail Holocaust Memorial, Berlin. Malek (2006)

1) I have the impression that our political history, especially during the Second World War, has a strong effect on our national identity. So I choose a monument of this period, which describes the struggle of German people with their

history.

2) The second reason for my choice is because of my impression of the national character. For me Germany is very critical, theoretical, strict, controlled and considerate. I choose a monument with a shape and composition that describes this national character.

3) The third reason for my choice is because of the politics nowadays in Germany. There are a lot of discussions about the NPD, the national democratic party of Germany. I saw a few days ago a reportage, in which a leader of this party spoke about a Holocaust denial. There are still parties which heed values that brought us among others to the second WW. So I wanted to stress the relevance of this theme in our generation. (HU5, P13: Malek, 2007)

Considering Addison's ideas about 'othering' and Butler (1990/1999)'s ideas about identity as an ongoing process of performativity related to socio-cultural practices, were initially difficult concepts for the students. Differentiating between a personal identification process instead of a fixed 'personality' was initially confusing, but began to appear in subsequent texts as queries between the two concepts. Thus, identity appears with related codes such as: *confusing, hard to explain it, difficulties to understand, provoke, story, message, subjectivity, creates attention, practice the consciousness, self-development, personality, feminine way.*

In the *Contemporary Approaches to Contemporary Art* seminar, Addison's (2007) view of identity being situated between essence and social construction is explored through images from Jeff Wall's exhibition at the London Tate Gallery, (2005), a female German graduate student queries, "Which influence shall I choose for me?"

It would be great if every individual would choose important and good influences out of this diversity of trash- influences. But how can the individual [k]now, which are the best influences? I think I can't answer this question because development consists of the working relationship between t[wo] opposite parts. Negative objects or behaviours are also necessary. We learn especially because of mistakes. To get to the point, there have to be positive and negative influence in the extern[al] world. Its all about how to deal with th[ese] influences. If you know something is good or bad you can use th[ese] influences. It's about the knowledge: What is something (the result)? How it could become like this (the process)? (HU5, P12: Malek, 2007).

In the above reflection, the student takes a pragmatic approach to the content from the readings and the dialogue, relating them directly to her query about the nature of influences on the individual's identity construction.

Walls' work brings together elements inspired from illuminated advertisements with those from old Master paintings, recontextualizing both within the context of artist-directed constructions and large-scale photography (Burnett, 2005). This recontextualization serves as a framework for social commentary and critique about modern life. Linking the discussion with identity to Wall's images, Malek asks, "Where are thoughts from?"

Thoughts are influenced by circumstances in the extern(al) world. But I think every individual has thoughts from the intern(al) part of the I, which can't be explained, which just exist, and I think this inner feeling is always truth in every individual. I think it's possible to train this feeling. The point in life is to take this feeling serious, and to think and trust on this feeling.

Jeff Wall trust on this feeling. A feeling that says something is going wrong. And he tries to catch these situations of distanced relationships. It's about the understanding, that in our society are rules that are without arguments, and these stupid rules are dangerous, because they have power and they express a support for people who haven't any different principles. They are also responsible for (the) depersonal(izing) of (the) individual in our society (HU5, P12: Malek, 2007).

Malek's reflection is a constellation across several themes, (e.g. the autonomy of the individual, social control and power, distanced relationships), as she draws connections between her own experience meeting the content and context of the session with the artist's. In the follow-up art assignment for recontextualizing a work of art as a self-portrait, she writes about the image she chose and why. [Figure 36]

:

Este: Idol of the renaissance. When I saw the picture and the title, I knew what I have to do: I'm annoyed of the Idol of beauty and in general Idols, so I took a 'not so nice'-picture of me and worked with it. (HU5, P10: Malek, 2007) [Figure 37]



Figure 36: Portrait of Este Idol of the Renaissance



Figure 37: Malek's Recontextualization of Este Idol of the Renaissance. Malek (2007)

Rollings, Jr. (2004) examines identity through a semiotic framework.

What we see, hear, and emotionally experience, become us. Therefore, to better understand identity, we must better understand the icons, the exemplars, the literary signifiers, and shaping stories that together become the symbolic systems through which we construct and reconfigure the alternating convergences of our self-knowledge and our knowledge of our inhabited worlds. Identities then may be viewed as semiotic creations, expanded by each ensuing

reinterpretation. Identities are signs (p. 73).

Looking at negative identities and their related socio-cultural concepts and imagery through the word 'bitch' occurred when a Czech doctoral student brought in an example of an image she liked to A *Semiotic Reading of Advertising Imagery* session. The image appeared to be a black and white recontextualization of a 1950's American magazine advertisement of a mother and daughter in a kitchen reading a book together. Contextually, the cookbook had been retitled, *On Becoming a Bitch*. Elfmarková shared that why she chose the image was that it was ironic. When I asked what makes it ironic, the discussion became an intercultural exploration of the word *bitch*. In Czech society, the word has connotations of a woman who is not nice, who treats others meanly. About the word's relationship to the image, "She had to be a bitch to teach her daughter how to become one," Elfmarková replies. Are the propositional conclusion congruent I ask? In the ensuing discussion, there is a brutalization of the image of the woman as bitch, which led to discussion on what it meant to be a feminist. About this session, Novotná says, "It proves to me that all knowing about art and interpretation is subjective."

Concerning the session:

I've realized how we are absorbed by the discourse of the discipline; when a question appears we do not react to it directly anymore, but by our connotations we transfer to the defined and classify problem, to the conception (known) from texts and discussions in the field.

We can also immediately use the concept of expectation to our attitude to the sessions. The expectation of our sessions must be something like : 'theor(et)ical and intellectual discussions about topics; in the domain of objective field, without exposing ourselves'. Obviously we are not ready to open ourselves to the others. I

felt tensions. For me it wasn't the problem to demonstrate the manipulation with the image. (HU4, P13: Novotná, 2007).

In her text, she clearly shows how our own speech objectifies the objectification behind socio-cognitive conflict.

Revealing Power Relations

Power as a code, supercode and discourse, is a common element embedded in the structure of language through syntax and semantics. All non-Czech under/graduate texts often contained generalizing imperatives with words such as *have to*, *must*, and *should*. Czech students, on the other hand, were less forceful with asserted opinions and used less obvious semantic choices within different syntactical structures. In the coding networks, codes such as *official*, *fear*, *manipulation of perception*, *interrogate*, *influence*, *outsider* and *should* were also related. The following example, post-graduate student, Černochová speaks directly about power within a conjectural discourse.

The problem with churches, philosophical schools, artistic streams...is maybe the problem of power, of politics. It has nothing to do with the 'touching the essence', which we feel, when we see some art work and we understand the language, which it speaks to us. (HU5, P48: Černochová, 2007).

She focuses on institutional forms of power and politics as separated from the relationship between an individual and a work of art. But *how* visual images speak to us, have their own embedded forms of power relationships. A Danish undergraduate student speaks about this:

The first exhibition made me think of the way we experience art. This exhibition was built upon some statements from different commercials and some were in English, some in Czech. Therefore I couldn't understand everything. Off course there was also the fact that the images were going so fast that you almost couldn't follow and read them. But I think that these circumstances did it, so that I saw at the piece in a different way than others might do. I looked at the images as if they were images, and not letters that made sense. Maybe I looked at it in the most 'pure' way, because I didn't have all kind of former images to compare the work to. (HU5, P:17, Poulsen, 2007)

The following case-study example illustrates the value of socio-cognitive conflict (Doise & Mugny, 1981). Socio-cognitive conflict is facilitated in a dialogic learning process where the engagement of the self enters a cognitive comparison with different points of

view, structuring statements made by others, and bringing new voices into conversation (Fulková & Tipton, 2008, p. 36). In the *Semiotic Reading of Advertising* seminar, the group created image categories for types of people they found portrayed in local, mass media images, and grouped them according to their poses and gazes. One particular category of women who are photographed from their back, with their heads looking back at the camera were found in all popular culture magazines and in daily newspapers that students brought in to the seminar each week. In many of these poses, the women were nude, partially clothed, or becoming so. Interpreting the expression on their faces as a sign of subordination, helplessness, or seduction was common. The group noticed that it was a common photographic pose used for women. The group discusses the idea that most images are structured to tell the viewer where they are. The selection of images is then grouped according to 'types' of women they portrayed according to their pose and gaze. When we discuss Mulvey's (1975/2001) discussion about the fetishization of the female figure as the object of desire, there is a group reaction to a female student who said she likes it that women are depicted as a 'sex object' and felt no need to apologize for it. When I asked the participant to explain more about her comment, there was a perceptible reaction and tension in the entire group when she explained that it benefited her to be desired by men also. This opened a heated exchange between the all-female group. Another participant reflects on that incidence:

I think, that it is very important, to hear something, what doesn't fit in my ideas. I need to hear it, so that I don't run away with only my view on the problems. And I don't take it as fight but as an opportunity to get some new ideas and to clear my own attitude towards the problem. I think that it is the same in the education or in the life of all. We can only bring some new ideas, bring and offer various points of view, as many as possible, so that everybody can choose the one, which is... the best. I read the article, *How Bodies Come to Matter* [note: Meijer & Prims, 1998] which you gave us some time ago. I liked the sentence: 'What matters is that lives do not serve as models; only stories do that.' [p. 275] I think, that it means, that the experience has to be as much concrete as possible, when it should have some effect on the personal development of the people. In education, in art or theatre also (HU4, P8: Černochová, 2007).

The participant exemplifies the way in which the contested ideas provoked her to consider new points of view. Through indexical connections, her text rhizomatically makes references to ideas as stories that influence others in various settings. By absorbing

the tension from conflicting points of view, Černochová reflection serves as a tool for meta-cognition. She also brought these ideas in practice in her theatre arts work with a performance company, Evry Baby. At the time she wrote this reflection, she was beginning to work on a new script for a performance. The final piece, *Osmá sedí u stolu, pojídá mou mrtvolu* (*The Eight Are Sitting at the Table, Eating My Corpse*) was a collage of the women's own texts and stories. Taking the title from a verse of a popular children's song, the piece also used parts of the Canticles (the songs of Salomon)

from the Bible, poems from Sylvia Plath, statistical data and information about women's circumcision and children's songs and games [Figure 38].

Inherent in any form of voice is not just the act of speaking or of being heard but also the practice of active listening. Active listening is silent and observational, giving room to differences of opinion without cutoff or interruption or an imposition of superior knowing. To discover the relational aspects between types of discourse, dialogue initiates internal and external analytical and critical conversations that sometimes may lead to uncomfortable discoveries:

...feminist art history came increasingly to situate female experience within a larger framework of multiple and fluid gendered identities and positions, and to consider gender as only one of many factors in a constantly shifting and evolving, often tensely balanced, pattern of power relationships. (Broude & Garrard, 2005, p. 1)



Figure 38: Detail from performance at Roxy. Tipton (2007)

The relationship between power and identity codes can be seen in the following reflection by a Danish undergraduate student. Reflecting on one of two installations, *That's The Way It Is*, in the Jinřicha Chalupeckého Finále 2007 by Jan Nálezka, Poulsen writes:

The first exhibition made me think of the way we experience art. This exhibition was built upon some statements from different commercials and some was in English, some in Czech. Therefore I couldn't understand everything. Of course there was also the fact that the images were going so fast that you almost couldn't follow and read them. But I think that these circumstances did it, so that I saw the piece in a different way than others might do. I looked at the images as if they were images, and not letters that made sense. Maybe I looked at it in the most 'pure' way, because I didn't have all kind of former images to compare the work to (HU5, P51: Poulsen, 2007).

The artist chose materials from a year's worth of local news magazines featuring political, social and cultural content, the daily *Dnes*, *Reflex* and *Time IN*, alphabetically arranging statements or recommendations that did not have any direct relation to the offered product.

Three simultaneous projectors, each one with the content from a different magazine, projected large frames of light into which black and white letters from these slogans alternated, resulting in a stroboscopic effect. In the background accompanying the texts a repetitive, sweet, hypnotic piano music played. In the artist statement, Nálevka states, "The objective was to create a vast amount of text bordering on legibility." But the visual effect recontextualizing the advertisement slogans in this manner was brutal, revealing the stated objective as disconnected shapes and incomprehensible words, but sedated and lulled to sleep by the sweetness of the music. Poulsen begins her reflection in her own voice but quickly shifts to be speaking for anonymous others, casting a generalizing net across the invisible landscape of other viewers. Her text alternates back and forth between 'I' and "we" just as the letters did from the projector.

It is not clear if 'we' means those of us in the room with her or extends out beyond the borders of the gallery. But she is conscious of herself being different, of catching something others may not have understood, something she refers to as, "looking at it in the most "pure" way." It is not clear what her concept of pure really means - that she has glimpsed letters as images? Or she has seen what the artist intended about his work according to the paper we all received when we walked into the gallery space together? She is trying to take a look at how she looks – a meta-cognition of her own visuality, but has not yet come to terms with what her own process of sensory-perception is and how she interprets it.

About the second installation by Eva Kotatková, another subject, Poulsen writes:

On the way to this exhibition Teresa Tipton talked about the art around us. Is there art around us? Is art only art when it is exposed at an art gallery? Surprisingly the artist on this gallery made art out of daily life things.

But when is art, art?

- When you have an individual experience, feelings about it?
- Is it individually based?
- Does art always have to express something like a message?
- Is art only something that can be exposed in a gallery?
- When it is provocative?
- When it surprises you?

Earlier, in the traditional art view, we thought that art was only to be exposed in galleries. Art was fine culture. Then the artist was a genie. The central thing in an art piece was the message that the artist wanted to get out. Today the art comes from the 'outside', instead of from the 'inside' of the artist. Art can be exposed everywhere. The viewer makes their own opinion and seeks their own experience of the piece without an explanation from the artist. So I guess I can make a conclusion, that art is everywhere around us. And art is art TO ME, when I think it is art...? (HU5, P51: Poulsen, 2007).

Network of Relationships

After conducting a content analysis of coding terms and phrases across pre-service units, I consolidated the supercode, 'structures of influence' as one level of a process of identifying and forming relationships as a 'network of relationships'. A network of relationships is a multi-leveled process that includes other related codes such as, 'principle of relationship', as well as 'establishing a relationship'. These codes can be seen working together in the following example, interrelated with palimpsestic and conjectural discourses.

We were talking about intertextuality in the images. The example - Banksy's work. Every image or action is reaction to some action, which happened before. It can happen knowingly or unknowingly from the artist (subject). Everybody has another experience with the world and the system, the net, in which the intertextual connections are realized, is more or less different for every person.

I think sometimes, that it is necessary to put the work in the intertextual context. Sometimes can also happen, that the creator doesn't appreciate, that his work adverts to something else. His experience doesn't contain the information. But the intertextual linkage is there and the audience or viewer can see it as the gap or fault in the statement. The product can work as incomplete or out-of-date. Example: last weekend at the competition of young reciters. One boy was reciting a very popular Czech poem, which is approximately a hundred years old (František Gellner: Všichni mi lhali). But perhaps 20 years ago one punk-rock

band sang this poem and it became very popular. This boy maybe didn't know that he was reciting the poem in a very traditional way. But the major part of the audience knew that and that may be the reason why his recitation was not successful. (HU4, P3: Černochová, 2006)

In this example, identity discourses are interconnected with abjected sexuality as a graduate student from Finland reflects on Addison's (2007) article on *identity politics*.

And yes, there (are) a lot of gay/lesbian people in art schools. That can be a sign that the atmosphere in art schools is liberal enough to show your personality. But could it also be a sign that people with less common sexuality have gone through a lot of thinking which makes them maybe better to work with their senses? I do think senses and creativity always go together (HU5, P30: Lindstrom, 2007).

Lindstrom relates Addison's text to art schools and uses 'sign' in a metaphoric way, drawing a lattice of semiotic relationships between sexual preference, thinking, sensing, and creativity. Her hidden stereotype, (Slavík, 2006), however, is not about an extrapolated and politicized context about sexual preference that oscillates between repressed and liberalized policies in art schools, but that this particular discourse replaces Addison's critique on the rhetoric of inclusion. Addison makes the point that the identification process of 'othering' which is normalized in schools, excludes certain kinds of identities from recognition, acceptance, and content in art curricula and programs. But Lindstrom focuses instead on a discourse that a liberalized atmosphere and gay/lesbian students are related, which is a different form of 'othering'.

Between These Two Wantings

In her book, *Undoing Gender*, Butler (2004) asks, "What does gender want?" This query formed the basis of a session during the seminar, *A Semiotic Reading of Advertising Imagery*, reflects,

What does gender want?

I realized that I don't know exactly what gender means. I think that everybody who has heard this word connects it somehow with feminism. And this is another problem. I met a lot of people, who think, that feminism is an impolite word. And some were also women and university-students. These men and women are afraid of these words, and of their meaning, of course. I understand feminism as a part of 'common sense'. I think that nobody is better or worse because of his or her sex. But women are often different from men in thinking and behavior. Gender is describing this difference and trying to find its origin. Maybe gender wants to show

men, how women think, and to show women how men think so that they could better understand each other.

Gender is not only science, but this investigation and research can happen also in the world of art. *The Dinner Party* from Judy Chicago was for me something like an exploration, 'how it may be by women'. The pieces of art or theater performances or poems or whatever are a concentration of thinking about some theme. And it can reach the recipient and make him think about new impulses. The more we see or know, the more we also appreciate how the world is not easy or simple. The performance or painting can be a stop for a short time in which we can identify ourselves with the ideas of somebody else, so we can have a rest in our own thinking, and in which we also find new impulses for thinking on. Gender is determined by area, society, culture, family, in which we live. When the person wants to be successful in society, he/she has to accommodate to the society. but everybody should also keep his or her own identity. Where is the well-balanced relationship between these two wantings? (HU4, P3: Černochová).

Something Escapes

Allora & Calzadilla's film, *Under Discussion*, (2005) in the *Uncertain States of America* exhibition is analyzed by Malek for her final project. Using the reflective process to analyze her reaction to the video, she queries:

What is this film about? Is it about politics or about art or about publicity? I can't understand the intention of this film. Is this table a video- animation or is it really constructed? If it is possible to construct it, I would like to do the same. Who is this boy? Where is this boy? What happens there? What kind of relationship does he have to this place? Was there a war? What kind of war? What is this boy doing in daily life? Is he a refugee? Does he like tourism? Why don't they show the signs with written letters longer? I can't read so fast. They had to invest a lot of money if they had a view from a helicopter. Why didn't they take a normal boat? Why do they stress this point with this table? Nice travel, I would like to do it as well.

She quotes the artist statement in her paper as part of an analysis of why the video irritated her.

For viewers who don't know this context, there are enough visual signs in the film that give clues. You will never be able to know the full story. There will always be something that escapes. This relates to everything in life, and that includes a work of art. You see the image; you hear the sound; all these moments generate signs. Out of these signs you create images, passions, emotions, experience. But you will never be able to know every little detail about this thing or this work. Tomorrow we will imagine something else and there will be new

things that we discover about the work we did (<http://www.namjunepaikaward.de/d/max.html#allorca>). (HU5: P8: Malek, 2007)

Besides the impression of irritation that develops because of the obviously unavailable intention, I attracted attention to some more facts: the film isn't linguistically commentated, there is a table instead of a boat, I see many perspectives of landscapes, a nice view and a lot of old destroyed military machines. Furthermore there are four short scenes to which I paid attention: firstly at the beginning of the film there is a long scene about the hand of the man which is based on the table, secondly the scene with the empty road and thirdly the scene when he stands on the table and reads a sign. All of them have a not-moving camera angle. The strongest reaction is that I developed an interest for what happened at this place. (HU5: P8: Malek, 2007)

Concluding her analysis, Malek (2007) writes, "This video was interesting for me, because it irritated me. It provoked ambiguous feelings." After analyzing why, she continues, asking her own questions:

If I wouldn't have to write a reflection about this film, I wouldn't probably recognize the real intention. In fact I would be confused about this film but normal life with influences would come over me and I would push away such confusing thoughts and wouldn't try to clear this situation. Is it necessary in our life that we force ourselves to take time and to reflect consciously conflicts, so that we can understand life? Consequently the behavior in this special situation shows our behavior in general. This film gives a way to reflect ourselves. (HU5: P8: Malek, 2007)

For the university level student, previous conceptions and feelings about signs must sometimes be challenged in order to enter into dialogue with them. This is apparent with Allora and Calzadilla's (2005) video, *Under Discussion*. Malek's discursive process reveals a *movement of becoming aware* of how her reactions and feelings influenced thinking and why. Personal felt experience was a vehicle for revealing how her codes and 'rules of art' operated as part of her cognitive framework. At the same time, she was challenged to work with the frustration and irritation from her experience and 'go underneath' the conflict it created for her. By intentionally doing so, she transformed her experience and reactions, and hence her perceptions.

The Art is Broken Apart by Discussion

The code, 'the art is broken apart by discussion' was a potent metaphor for how the participants experienced the impact of dialogic discussion and reflective practice. Continuing her reflection about Allora and Calzadilla's video, Malek writes,

As I experienced during the work on this video, the feeling of irritation could be a chance for the identification- process. We should practice our awareness to recognize the intentions in daily life and to experience our own intention. To find intention or to build identity means a mental process and accordingly changing. I think its important to fix these thoughts, one way is an analysis but I think a better way would be to produce something visual, something with pictures, an own production that shows your intention and above all it should be a visual symbol which is so strong that it overwhelm the publicity intention. This way is not easy and human being tend to be lazy and to follow the ordinary way which is the easiest one without obstacles, so we have to force ourselves to experience and to reflect ourselves (HU5, P8: Malek, 2007).

The participant voice alternates between 'I' and 'we', generalizing her insights from a personal identity to an abstracted group identity. This text reveals some of her socio-cultural values related to work and production. Through her reflection, she finds a fresh insight that a better way for her to work through the identification process is visually.

In the following reflection, the participant's thoughts are also somewhat broken apart, circulating between a personal experience that she axiomizes.

Critical discourse analysis is the reasonable method for dealing with art in post modernism. The only guidelines, if any, in this method, is to look at the art and discuss why it turned out that way. When the art is broken apart by discussion, you look at it in relation to yourself. When talking to other people our minds are opened towards things, we might not know - about anything and ourselves. School is the perfect place for sharing insides among people with very different insides. (HU5, P60: Del Priore, 2007).

While Del Priore is nominalizing the meaning of critical discourse, she makes an important observation that, "When the art is broken apart by discussion, you look at it in relation to yourself." As her discourse had previously demonstrated, she struggled with a conflict between a regulatory and authoritative voice of what 'should' be done, thought, or felt, and a freedom and openness which she interpreted as lacking systematization or

structure. Breaking apart the regulatory structure is an important step in her unfolding awareness of the possibility of relationships she can choose to establish.

Sculptural Presence

Malek (2007) brings an intertextual use of Joseph Beuys' Theory of Social Sculpture and Tarkovsky's 'Sculpting in Time' theories into her reflection about the videos included in the Uncertain States of America exhibition. From an interview with Beuys, he is quoted:

My objects are to be seen as stimulants for the transformation of the idea of sculpture...or of art in general. They should provoke thoughts about what sculpture can be and how the concept of sculpting can be extended to the invisible materials used by everyone...how we mold and shape the world in which we live. (<http://www.walkerart.com/archive>).

Malek's observes this process within herself:

(Art's) a way that has no different purpose (than) to express the inner world and find a connection, a relationship to the stuff outside. In doing this process, it develops a result that expresses to you what's going on in this internal world, and also what you want to be. It doesn't matter if the result shows what you are or what you want to be, because even if you express what you want to be, you will recognize the relationship between these two positions and that shows you again something about your identity. (HU5, P12: Malek, 2006)

Art as self-expression persists within a new identity of interconnectedness. This shifts psychopathography's previous emphasis of finding psychological causes of self-expression in art to the phenomenography of its conceptual structure.

Beauty's Necessary Presence?

In the seminar, *A Semiotic Reading of Advertising Imagery*, a Czech graduate student reflects on Vítková's (2006) article, *Down With Creativity, Let's Serve Beauty* about a mysterious German performance artist, Greta Frau, who only allows herself to be photographed from the back. Frau founded, "...a group called 'the Sect of Beauty' whose members are called trancia, which means the same as a portion, a serving" (p. 78). Dialogically this text is linked to advertisements of women as objects to be consumed by looking, desiring, or emulating. In discussing this, she says,

I like looking at women the fashion industry promotes as beautiful. People tell me they are just being exploited but I find them beautiful. No matter what you believe about them and why they are there, you can't help but say they are beautiful. I don't know why but I am fascinated by them. (HU4, Švadlenková, 2006)

Mulvey's (1975/2001) theory of the objectification of women by male gaze does not hold ideological significance for her, a response which was emerged in a latter session of the same seminar around other images.

Beauty as a concept, an ideal, and a reality, is a palimpsestic discourse that emerges in a variety of ways. A French undergraduate student reflects on the meaning she attributes to the concept of beauty through querying Yarowsky's (2001) article, *The Beauty Fallacy: Dave Hickey's Aesthetic Revisionism*.

I'd already spoke about this famous sentence of Gilles Deleuze 'artists are conscience awakers'. But this quotation makes me think about this concept and during my experience in different exhibitions. I often think about this sentence, and it means more and more for me. So that's why I can say that I agree with Hickey image can change the world by this way, when the artist achieve to change our opinion, our mind, our conscience. (HU5, P1: Tanret, 2007).

Responding to Hickey's statement that "...nothing redeems but beauty" (as cited by Yarowsky, p. 10), she writes,

Sometimes the lack of beauty is the beauty of the work, the message. That's why we can't use the achievement (of) beauty for judging a work of art. (HU5, P1: Tanret, 2007)

But when asked what her criteria are for beauty, she answers:

It's always the same for me, something is beautiful when it makes me peaceful. When all is harmonious and when it cause(s) good feelings. I appreciate also the originality, and sometimes I associate this aspect to the beauty. But in some cases, I think something (which) is shocking is beautiful because the image was well made, and because the image was the finest translation of the message. Sometimes, if I like the idea, I would find the image beautiful. In this case, my judgment is not on the image but on the message and I assimilate the both. (HU5, P1: Tanret, 2007)

Reordering the Space

Reordering the space was a code that appeared as a kind of transposition discourse, where inquiry processes in combination with conjecture, were answered by new awarenesses, insight or revelation about a particular topic or theme. "Reorganization, or blending, is the essential ingredient for thinking metaphorically regardless of whether the terms of frames, maps, schemas, or domains describe the system." (Serig, 2004, p. 230).

In the following example, a participant describes how the reordering process operates when introduced to Goodman and Elgin's (1988) *Reconceptions in Philosophy*.

After dialogue about Goodman & Elgin's (1988) text 'reading' hierarchies of symbol systems, Černočová writes,

We had to retard our minds, so that we could distinguish, what is the object of analysis and what is already our construction, interpretation of the object. I think it is often the problem in communication, not only visual. I see it also in another sphere of art, in the theatre, which I am doing a little. Some of the interpretations are individual, some are understandable to more people. (HU4, P5: Černočová, 2007)

Here she explains how the process of dialogically examining the classification system behind her interpretations, helps her make connections to other modes of communication.

Answering my question, 'where do we find art?' Melanen asks, "If I want to go and see art and along with it sometimes beauty, why do I have to do it in apathetic and isolated institutions?" (HU2, P5: Melanen, 2006). She finds an answer in the *Process* exhibition held at a converted factory, called River Town Prague. "It was like fact and fiction, art and life composited together. It was experience, with all the sounds, smells and images." (HU2, Melanen 2006). Her reflection begins with a transposition discourse,

When you go in to the exhibition you are not sure if you go in to the some 'cash and carry' shop, you see everywhere stuff, things and images. You can hear loud music, you feel unreal, the music goes hand in hand with the surroundings. You can smell coffee, cigarette ends, spoiled food. When you start walking around you see so many interesting things that you have to look at every nice and thrilling detail. Robots, stuffed animals with decorating, cards, posters, kitschy ornaments, used candles, lipsticks, plastic toy soldiers, installations from ads and plastic bottles, etc. Living room, kitchen, bedroom, bar, toilet with a place for a

cashier. Signs: What do you do at Christmas? Ignore us! Wanted: missing self? Camera phone obsession! You see around used coffee mugs, coats on chairs, wondering are they part of the exhibition or has somebody just forget them there (HU2, P5: Melanen, 2006).

But Melanen's reflective process does not end in descriptive response. Her process continues, reordering the conceptual framework she has previously used for contemporary artworks.

...the Process exhibition was the most inspiring and impressive exhibition for me during this time. I see it somehow as a turning point how I have and how I now approach contemporary installations and mediaworks. I remember when I walked through the exhibition I was amazed and almost shocked. (HU2, P5: Melanen, 2006)

Davey (1999) echos this when he states:

For art to open our eyes to the world it has to do something other than remain in the purely sensible. It has, to borrow a hermeneutic metaphor, to speak, and it can only do so if it successfully enables us to understand that there is something more to be seen in it than what is immediately before the eye....art resides within the procreative tensions and interdependencies of sight and insight. (p. 8)

CHAPTER 6: RE/PRESENTATION: SIGN EXCHANGE, PLURALITY AND UNPREDICTABILITY

Interpreting Research Findings

As I began the data analysis with the qualitative software *Atlas.ti*, my original question, “What impact does teaching visual semiosis to students and teachers of art, have on their perception of contemporary visual encounters?” shifted from central to secondary emphasis. What became apparent as the data became grounded within its interpretive frame, was that while the pedagogical design formed the context, it was the learners’ process of coding and meaning-making that stood out as an inseparable element of the dialogic and reflective practice. As the dialogic and reflective methods revealed the proprioception of each individual over shorter and longer periods of time, what became intriguing was the way in which the process allowed each person to observe and *actualize* their own thinking. While both context and content questions exist in tandem within the same experiential conditions, I shifted more of my attention to the learner’s standpoint than on correlating the pedagogical one, as I originally had conceived the study.

Analysis of Coding

Before entering the manual coding of all text samples into *Atlas.ti*, two findings were immediately apparent: firstly, written reflections over the course of a semester (or longer) by students revealed a *movement of becoming aware* of their own thinking and secondly, that felt experience was a vehicle for revealing how personal codes and ‘rules of art’ operate throughout each participant’s reflections.

An open-ended process of critical reflection is a tool which the pre-service participants from Charles University reported that they had never used in this way before. Yet, it became a powerful tool for questioning oneself without judgment and to be given permission to affirm the authority of their own voice. Whereas the ways in which

participants encode and decode visual experiences contain derivations of the cultural context, the situated learning experience, the thematic concept from the scholarly text and visual art experience, and the teacher's voice, their experience remains individual and unique to them personally.

Students have visual preferences that are individual and are often based on immediate 'felt' experience. In the Charles University sample (HU1, HU2, HU4, HU5), all participants were female except one. While most of these participants reported using their feelings (in HU5, feeling as a code word appeared 43 times) as criteria for how they responded to visual encounters, both genders in the other samples (HU3, HU6, HU7) [with a larger percentage of males], report similarly. At the under/graduate level, initial felt experience could rapidly shift with exchanges and ideas with others. But given the same dialogic exchange with high school students, they reported that their immediate impressions were less likely to change with the input of others. For high school students, first impressions appear to be more stable. Gender preferences were visible by the selections of images students chose to speak and/or write about. A female undergraduate student from France explains:

My way of thinking is in essence linked with all my experiences. That's why when I look at a work of art or when I want to create something, I begin with my feelings. What do I feel, and why? How could I translate this feeling? We have to make some choices; we are in the opposition, stay serious, correct or be free and take another way for expressing our ideas. (HU5, P2: Tanret, 2006).

Her process of working through feeling tones reveals that her border for decision-making is contextual to the relationship between feelings and external expectations and constraints. Similarly, Czech graduate student Černochová writes,

First, I look at it and I decide if I like it or not on emotional way. Then I compare it to things I have seen before. I try to find out what it wants to say to me (or to the audience) and then to find out, how it is saying it to me. (HU5, P64: Černochová, 2007).

Across all of the units, the most common response was similar to this one by Del Priore (2007), "In everyday life I usually decide if art is good by feeling if it touches me."

I feel my guts. It has to make an emotion inside of me. It's good when I think about

it afterwards. (HU5, P66: Poulsen, 2007).

Art as self-expression was commonly stated amongst under/graduate students:

Art is a way to express this feeling and the inner world of the individual. It shows that in the intern(al) world there is going on something different: creativity, own thoughts, humor, sadness, feelings. Art is a way to make these emotions visual (HU5, P12: Malek, 2006).

Czech under/graduate students used the phrase, 'it doesn't touch me' quite often across all seminars to explain why they didn't like a particular image in an exhibition. The integration of feeling with visual preferences are usually called 'aesthetic' but for the most part, what is reported by students does not fit into the normative criteria of traditional aesthetic frameworks. Whereas the discourse of graduate students reflected objectifying speech about aesthetic frameworks, practically speaking, their reflective visual experience did not match them. Aesthetic frameworks tend to encode meaning into visual qualities according to historical, ontological and epistemological systems as if they are inherencies instead of models also reflecting various situated, socio-cultural, economic, and political value systems. Grounding students in the means and tools to differentiate between objectifying and authentic discourses by querying where personal values and beliefs originate and how they operate to frame expectations for experience - takes time and practice. This was evident in the levels of understanding between high school, bachelors, graduate, doctoral students and from students who fully participated in more than one of my courses.

Visual preferences by participants, on the other hand, redefine aesthetics as composites of personal experiences that rarely included language for what are considered traditional works of art. There isn't a commonly used term for this phenomenon if the term aesthetics is not used. Perhaps 'intervisuality' as a term comes closest to what is happening from a process point of view, but language that has morphed in other realms from new dimensions of experience, such as the word, 'gamebot' or 'cyborg' has yet to be invented for this phenomenon in arts education. Arguirre speaks of it as a pragmatic aesthetics (2004) [Figure 39].

In this domain, there were large differences between high school and under/graduate students. For high school students, written and verbal perceptions reflected more directly aspects of advertisements and popular culture artifacts such as those from clubbing posters, movies, gaming, x-box, fashion, and anime/cartoon characters, CD-DVD covers, promotional flyers or posters, magazines, internet, shopping, mobile phones, social networking on the Internet, etc. Some high school students took out their mobile phones and took pictures during the discussion.



Figure 39: At the Uncertain States of America Exhibition. Černochová, (2007).

My way of thinking is in essence linked with all my experiences. That's why when I look at a work of art or when I want to create something, I begin with my feelings. What I feel, and why? How could I translate this feeling? We have to make some choices; we are in the opposition, stay serious, correct or be free and take another way for expressing our ideas at the sessions at the Galerie Rudolfinum to show each other the results while we were talking. Sometimes encoded preferences shifted quickly at the under/graduate level from interactions with curators and teacher or group discussion around a contemporary work of art/encounter, and their relationship to scholarly text given prior to the session.

With under/graduates, there were visual encounters that persisted and recurred at a later time in text, spiraling with new connections or oscillating with a dialectical self-examination whose tension sometimes did not resolve itself in thought but was nevertheless stated. With high school students, on the other hand, contextual information from others or text did not easily or readily alter their impressions, perceptions, or opinions. They appeared to not be interested in curatorial text and only rarely did some of the older seminar students read the curatorial notes in exhibitions. They preferred to mingle in small groups engaged in their own discussion about a particular work. Whereas high school students made immediate interpretations with personal, cultural and gender codes of reference that were influenced by peers and not experts, under/graduate students majoring in art/education looked for understanding and meaning primarily from the artist's and curatorial point of view and actively tried to construct it through visual,

verbal and written clues and group exchanges and intentionally tried to alter what they experienced from it in their own art.

Interpreting Discourses

Personal Identity Discourses

The sense of personal identity presented through narratives stating personal beliefs and opinions, universalizing statements from cultural models, and visual preferences, were common discourses across nationalities, even though the characteristics of their stories and the cultural contexts were quite different. To some degree, it could be said that all discourses relate to personal identity, even though they are thematically differentiated.

Drawing upon Butler's (1990/1999 and 2004) work exploring self-location and gender as a performative process related to socio-cultural norms and expectations, the identification of 'cultural self-location' is a tool for the enunciation of an individual's cultural models of what is relevant and irrelevant to them, including how they embody sets of socio-cultural values, beliefs, and attitudes.

Cultural self-location is explicitly related to personal identity discourses. Identity discourses will include dis-identification as well. Mindell (1993) includes sensory orientation as a part of identity, not only how one assembles and conducts herself or himself. A sensory orientation includes visual, aural, kinesthetic and proprioceptive processes. Unlike 'embodied realism' which describes the embodiment of reason via the sensorimotor system (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999 as cited by Serig, 2004, p. 230), Mindell suggests embodiment happens through psychic imagery which actively and consciously recreates reality as an indivisibility of mind, body, and society.

The use of conjecture, (Popper, 1958 as cited by Bresler, 2006, p. 53) as Bresler describes, generates a space for interconnections to be posited, tested, and realized. Marginalized by the use of refutation from scientific discourse as a measure of certitude, conjecture is a tool for mapping a possible new space without necessarily occupying it. Conjectural discourse appears as verbal and written contingencies that test certainty while

transgressing it.

Palimpsestic discourse, on the other hand, is text that is written, then partially erased, and written over again (Tavin, 2005, p. 5). It is a form of intertextuality that draws upon textual and visual antecedents and re-presents them through a process of re-examination and reframing. Palimpsestic discourse is differentiated from mimetic and nominalizing discourses. Kristeva (1986) identifies mimesis as a construction according to verisimilitude, "to the extent that the object is posited as such" (p. 109). Mimesis partakes of the grammatical and symbolic order by imitating meaning. Mimesis functions in texts as a kind of mirror device used for imitating understanding but which does not actually demonstrate understanding itself. As a kind of palimpsestic, "...mimetic discourse takes on the structure of language and, through narrative sentences, posits a signified and signifying object" (Kristeva, 1986, p. 110). Nominalizing discourse re-peat's statements within propositions that are not entirely accurate. It is a type of re-writing, but an inaccurate one. In order to differentiate between them, I have identified texts with *re-marked* teacher discourse as palimpsestic discourse, within which the other two types of palimpsestic discourse appear. Whereas palimpsestic discourse appears more often for undergraduate students as opposed to graduate students, interestingly, it did not appear in this group of high school questionnaires and writing. Transposition discourse is a type of in-sight given to a particular event or concept that bridges what it is re-considering with what it re-vials. Professionalizing narrative relates to ideas and concepts students have about their work as art teachers. It also appears in the study as discourse relating their expectations for using course content and learning in their anticipated teaching situations.

Cultural Self-Location

Identity as a code word appeared 43 times in HU5. Using Gee's idea of cultural models and Butler's concept of identity as a performance (1990/1999), students are asked to consider what their cultural self-location is. Reading Addison's (20007) *Identity Politics* before class, participants in the Critical Approaches seminar considered how they

identified themselves and how their self-location influences their experience of visual encounters.

I grew up in Denmark, a Scandinavian democratic country with liberal values. I believe that everybody have the right to be and do what they want as long as it doesn't hurt anybody else...The things I treasure the most (are) my family and friends. I believe they made me who I am, cause I am sure that identity is grounded in a person's social relations. Maybe that is why I want to become a teacher; because school doesn't just develop skills, but helps a person to develop his/her identity in the process of social interaction. (HU5, Del Priore, 2006)

The context of her self-location supports Butler's concept of the subject performing within their socio-cultural and historical context of influences. Within this framework is her own conjecture for the motivation of becoming a teacher.

Approaching the query about personal identity from another standpoint is this student presenting a list of attributes resembling a truncated resume:

Human-woman-25 years-European-Czech-Live in south Bohemia and Prague-21 century-daughter of Pavel and Hana-They gave me my character values -Czech, German, English-I like visual art and theatre-talent?-Studies-High school-University-Art education-Drama ed-Art history. I met a lot of wonderful people-I do theatre, I like studying-Job-Castle-Guide-Internship-Galleries-Values: sincerity, reliability, responsibility, love, respect. Beliefs: the religion I most understand is Christianity (determined by the tradition, I think) (HU5, Černchová).

In this example, self-location as a list of attributes appear as if the participant is objectifying herself as qualities and likes. Another participant uses a different approach, using conjecture to query herself in relationship to issues of identity as a process.

Cultural self-location was also revealed contextually, by self-reported interpretive mechanisms. Consider the following excerpt from a fourth-year student from Finland from the *Viewing Contemporary Art* seminar:

Art is not just something we see. It gets the meaning by going in our mind, making a path through the huge block of flats. It connects our seeing, information around us and our feelings. After all this we have a view of art. It is also dependent on the culture we are living in. Art can have other meanings in different places on the earth...Art is something which comes from inside of us trying to vent all the information of our culture. It is common but also personal. I believe producing art supports development because through it we can handle the

huge amount of information we absorb during our lifetime (HU4, P13: Raatikainen, 2006).

The discourse in the above excerpt is making generalizations from her own personal experience. The discourse is objectified and indirect until the last sentence where she makes a personal statement that is supported by yet another generalization. But the metaphoric thinking connects to a previous text where she explores the question about the meaning and origins of forms. Her text illustrates a dynamic system of elements within the context, what Serig (2006) refers to as ,a transactive network‘:

They evidence doing, carrying on and communication-a practical transaction between elements within the network. And furthermore, investigating these networks enables a more thorough understanding of the conceptual structure of visual metaphor (p. 230).

Palimpsestic Discourse

Palimpsestic discourse appeared most commonly in undergraduate texts in relation to verbal (and sometimes written) content taken from the group dialogue in the seminar session. Palimpsestic discourse repeated and rewrote particular phrases, content, and concepts, sometimes erroneously. The following passage from a graduating Bachelor's student from Denmark mimics and nominalizes teacher discourse discussing Davey's (1999) article on the *Hermeneutics of Seeing*.

The article about hermeneutics I think was very much in touch with what we came around in lessons before. It provides an important interpreted framework -the framework which is necessary in the confusion of the post modern turn. Hermeneutics speaks for critical discourse analysis. The value is the building of knowledge in relationship. The dialogical approach is necessary in contemporary art. Art is best understood in dialogue, sharing your insides with other people. Thereby the hermeneutics claim that dealing with art is not entirely subjective. We see things in terms of our associations; the terms being social, personal, historical and cultural. And it makes perfectly sense that these terms are dependant on each other. (HU5, P60: Del Priore, 2007).

This was a difficult text and discussion for students as evidenced by the way in which specific phrases of teacher discourse were put together with the text without fully understanding their conjoined meanings. The student repeats and splices phrases that don't belong together (e.g. "Hermeneutics speaks for critical discourse analysis.")

through her own declarative form, with words such as ‘guidelines, reasonable, depended on, necessary’, etc. It is not clear how hermeneutics ‘speaks’ for critical discourse analysis or how CDA is the ‘reasonable’ method whose ‘only guidelines, if any,’ she describes ‘...look at art and discuss why it turned out that way.’ In terms of reflecting on the seminar discussion, her text passage functions as an erroneous mimesis, with declarative statements that have bits of accuracy but as a whole, the meanings do not stand up to their proposed content, nor are they an accurate reflection of what transpired in the session. It is also wholly understandable as a strain across languages, new terminology, and conceptual frameworks. Interestingly, it is possible to see how the student is conditioned to take notes in school and ‘give’ them back to the teacher. At another discursive layer, it is possible to see that her own operating structure has selected a method for ‘reading’ art that has been projected into hermeneutics and critical discourse analysis as *terms* but not as concepts. Unfortunately, like Hannah Greely’s (2004) work of art in the *Uncertain States of America* exhibit, of the same name, what she has represented is a Muddle. [Figure 40].



Figure 40: Hannah Greely (2004) *Muddle*. Tipton (2008).

The role and function of reflective writing in this particular example gives a ‘snapshot’ of thinking within a particular part of a process. As Melanen describes of her own growth in the reflective process:

It is important to report the first reflections and observations even if they are not the ‘right’ or correct ones. To learn to develop the issue hand in hand same time with writing is sometimes a hard task. Nobody wants to read only the distinguished and final ideas and it is not useful for the writer either (HU2, P6: Melanen, 2006).

In the next palimpsestic example, the first two sentences remark my words with the personal pronoun, ‘my’.

It is important to be conscious of what is behind my concepts of beauty and art. Where do my ideas come from? It is hard to recognize these issues by myself. I think first of all that it is cultural, how the society where I am living handles art, which art is important, what kind of canons lie behind my art history studies, what kind of art gets reputation in media. What is my own history, what exhibitions have I visited in childhood, how are my parents, which exhibitions do I go to or what books do I read? I think that all these kinds of things have an influence on my

concepts now, which are changing all the time. (HU2, P5: Melanen, 2006).

This is a good example of the palimpsestic discourse where a question I asked, ('Where do your ideas about beauty and art come from?') are turned into a personalized statement in the first sentence. The second sentence rewrites a statement I made, ('It's important to know where your ideas come from.') as a question during dialogue with an image in the *Process* exhibition. Using them in this way, the participant makes a query with declarative statements that are re-presented and then reflected upon in a circulation between the two processes, evoked by my statements to her during the original dialogue.

Conjectural Discourse

By testing certainty, conjectural discourse opens a space for insight and fresh ideas to emerge. Drawing upon Addison's (2007) ideas about identity, this graduate student writes,

Is identity something we are born with or is it constructed? Is it an object or a social practice? Nicholas Addison writes, 'An identity is something constructed within the affordances of a given culture and in dialogue with the biological as well as social potential of each individual' [p.18]. Identity is not all just given. We have options. So if I am not going to make it that well in my life can I blame my personality. Should I be able to change it? I am confused. Maybe I should not mix personality and identity together? (HU5, P30: Lindstrom, 2007)

Voicing confusion takes courage, as well as demonstrating a willingness to be inside of it.

In the following excerpt, a doctoral student also associates pure with visual coding. 'Presume' works in a sublime manner as an embedded conjecture, operating as both declaration equivalent to 'assume', while also being a question that is being explored:

As I presume in my work, information transferred entirely by verbal code, is perceived differently from information transferred by using visual code, too (more in purely) (HU1, P6: Elfmarková, 2007).

During an activity of 'Testing Semiotic Hypotheses' in the *A Semiotic Reading of Advertising Imagery*, Cernochová (2007) reflects,

The image, I brought, with the T-mobile guy, made me angry, when I saw it for the

first time. I am not sure about my motivations, but the thing, which made me so angry was that this man, who is absolutely common, deformed the wall without any problem. And he could easily go into the 'ideal' world, where nobody works, where the young people play in the park. And the text ('With our tariffs the world will adapt to you.'). The theme for me could be the Ideal and the Reality. This also crossed my mind, when I saw the images of men and women last Wednesday. I suppose that the women are more idealized than men. That they don't correspond to the reality more than the images of men. And what is interesting is also the 'ideal'. I think, my 'ideal' of reality is very different from that ideal, which is displayed in the advertising for T-mobile. But the images of an ideal could have a big influence on their recipients, especially the advertisements in the magazines for children or young people (HU4, P4: Cernochová, 2007).

Černochová dialogues about her felt experience in relation to a particular advertising image, testing her ideas ('I suppose,' 'I think,' 'could have') about why a particular image made her angry. Interesting for me is the use of the word, 'deforms' about the computer generated image which she reads literally. Embedded in her conjecture about her motivation to be angry, are social discourses about work, leisure, income, ease of living which function as an 'ideal' for her. The coding evokes also a certain 'reality', either one that is desired or wished for as an emulation of an empirical experience that 'others' have – in this case low cost mobile phone tariffs – or they would not be successful advertising images. Real and artificial life are connected together, itself apparent in the title of a work of art by Czech students at Old Town Hall (2006) called, "The violence around us which we will keep in silence." [Figure 41]

Does the T-Mobile advertisement parody the work of art, with its own embedded 'violence' of deforming an innocent wall? In this case, the border between virtual images as fantasies and virtual images as desired realities, is contextually uncertain and fragile. The image functions either a really real reality or a true-fake one, according to how one chooses to interpret it. As Melanen (2006) commented, "How art it is to make



Figure 41: *The Violence Around Us* from exhibition of Czech, Polish, and Slovenian students. Melanen (2006)

commentary art which has something new and awakening in it" (personal communication, October 29, 2006).

Transposition

This particular discourse demonstrates a change in perception and experience that is reported as an outcome of a proprioception of thinking through the dialogical and reflective process. This excerpt from the participant's final self-assessment clearly reports her transposition:

The learning was to understand that art can be an experience, not only something that you can observe. I had been reading and even writing about this kind of approaching to the contemporary art but this was the first time that I actually internalized it. After the exhibition, our conversations and my reflections it has been easier for me to position myself when perceiving contemporary art.

As a summary of how my perception and thinking about encounters with art was impacted, I could say that my approach is now more comprehensive and explorative. The dialogic and reflective practice had a lot of impact to that which would not be able to achieve by reading and working alone. (HU2, P6: Melanen, 2006).

This participant shares her reflection on this process in herself,

One of my learnings is the process of thinking. In the exhibition and during your writing the process starts. Usually a couple of days after the exhibition when I open up my notes and thoughts I notice that my perceptions and ideas have changed or they have develop(ed) to some direction. I think I should pay attention to the process of thinking in my studies in the future too. For example if I have to examine some books, I read and make notes from the text and finally write an essay out of it. With process of thinking I could think beforehand what do I know/ think about the issue, then reading the book make notes about my thoughts too (this was new idea, this is interesting - why is it interesting). Then finally writing the essay I have got more material for writing and understanding more (HU2, P6: Melanen, 2006).

The above text applies an awareness of 'reflecting on reflection' to essays the participant expects to produce when she returns to Finland.

An important skill which I have been trying to concentrate more on is to complete and deepen my observations and opinions. To explain why I am saying this or what

lies behind my thoughts is a significant skill for a person who wants to write critiques in the future too. If one is able to point out the subjectivities concerning the matter only then one is able to say something objective about it, reading one's own text to an outsider will be difficult. (HU2, P6: Melanen, 2006)

Transposition discourse also occurred through the process of reflecting on particular topics. In this excerpt, Malek speaks about an insight she has about identity:

For me it was interesting to come to the conclusion that a person with a less intensive feeling and understanding for identity, is most of all afraid to recognize this. And I think the only way to improve this situation is to do something, to work, to begin somewhere and to make mistakes. I think most suitable way would be a process like this with a lot of humor. Laughing makes a stronger connection between people and this gives self-confidence. So it is easier to accept mistakes. (HU5, P12: Malek, 2007).

Later, in her self-assessment, she writes about one of her significant learnings of art as a sign system.

This awareness opens my possibilities of acting in my art work consequently in my life: to use things and their meanings in different situations to irritate prejudices and wants. The sign system of contemporary art at a glance says something about us nowadays, about us in the past and in the future....

My thinking is more opened to new combinations and the self-confidence to see art-production as art. The dialogical discussion and reflective practices corresponded to the visits at the exhibitions. I think this common influence was one of the main facts that made this assertion about contemporary art so strong (HU5, P14: Malek, 2007).

Professionalizing Discourse

Various forms of palimpsestic discourse emerged in the text. In this example, Lindstrom turns Addison's (2007) statement of possibility and turns it into a question by asking, "Can we as art teachers create a sanctuary in which difference can be voiced? (p.18).

...art teachers are already working in a field where it's easier to be different. When all students feel comfortable in a class everyone is treated as a person not as someone who is like us or not like us. You may use personality as tool for your art not as something that divides you from others. (HU5, P30: Lindstrom, 2007)

Another graduate student has specific ideas of using her significant learnings from the course in her artistic and professional practices:

I want to introduce a political theme in my artistic work and put the reflection of my own identity out of the main focus. I want to speak more with the student in Germany about their works. I want to try as a teacher in school to make a diverse art class and to open the way of producing and thinking. (HU5, P14: Malek, 2007)

I think that these ideas are important for education. I will try not to forget it during my work as the teacher. It is important not to forget, that the system has not only one way to grasp it. But also I think it is important to teach the children and young people to contemplate the system. In the system of visual culture, I think it is also important to think of the motivations both of the creators of images and of the spectators. When the people learn to realize, that the images can be sorted in various domains and schemes, they can learn to analyze it and maybe they will be not so easy manipulated by advertising or media in itself (HU4, P5: Černochová, 2007).

About the use of artmaking as part of the visual culture seminars, Malek writes:

My producing art beside contemporary art of others makes the differences and equalities more obvious. I felt a bigger motivation to understand the art of other people, with the aim to improve or understand my own art through these new ideas better (HU5, P14: Malek, 2007).

Metonymy and Polysemy

Difference and *different* are codes which surfaced in many forms within all HU1-5 sets of reflective writing. Interpreting language draws upon connotations and denotations of interpreted meaning, where levels of meaning embedded within terminology and its use, is contextual to the use of a post-structural view of discourse analysis. Metonymy, within language use, posits one thing to refer to an association with it. Polysemy, on the other hand, refers to one thing simultaneously having more than one meaning. In the following examples, both devices can be found in the student discourses.

There is a discourse of *difference* that appears in the previous example from the *Impress* exhibit. Addison (2007) posits that identity is often found in binary opposition of 'sameness and difference' in an exclusionary use of 'us and them.' (p. 11). Identities are woven together in narratives, expressing certain values that differentiate us from others.

With this in mind, any consideration of identities outside a cohesive, social structure (for example, across national and cultural boundaries or between social

and political communities) conjures a symbolic space of difference where the substance, the truth of a person resides....this space is frequently a site where the most extreme forms of power are consolidated and resisted. As such, identities are often carefully nurtured and reproduced, treasured and reinforced; they come to signal a sense of self determination (p. 11).

The photograph, *Ritual II*, is initially seen and interpreted by different participants, with differentiated levels of discourses. A meta-cognition is the way in which accessing and relating to academic discourse as she experiences it, functions functions as a barrier to encountering art. This observation leads to my own meta-cognition that I was enacting a role and provided the motivation for me to change it.

In the *Semiotic Reading of Advertising Imagery* seminar, Novotná considers difference in 'other' terms.

In thinking before the session I asked the question: Who is the other? With the hypothetical answer that it depends much on the position of the subject. The whole discussion convinced me of it. You bring the notion of cultural self-location. People in that position empirically define themselves like 'normal person, normal people'. So the border between the minority and a group of people I see in this self-location. Different way of acting makes others. And so, the question of minorities of the others is especially a question of the subject, identity of ourselves. I agree that the identity doesn't exist itself, but always in the relation with the others (!) maybe in the distance. I like the formulation that the subject is constructed through fantasies, desires and memory. (And in that field exactly works the advertising.) The subject represents itself for the others. (HU4, P1: Novotná, 2007).

Difference in this passage is revealed as relationally and socially coded behavior that is normative and connected to ethnicity. Citing Althusser's use of the term, interpellation, Addison, (2007, p. 11), Addison cites the historical instances of cases where identities have not been self-generated, but designated by others. The above example illustrates how assumed and unreferenced minorities have been interpolated - given identities by others. The symbolic space that the participant describes mirrors the assumption of self-determination by 'normal' people but not by 'others.' Her meta-cognition that this phenomenon is linked to advertising works perfectly well, as the *subject* which she refers to in advertising, is objectified, representing itself *as* others, becoming an *object* or an *object* of desire.

Addison (2007) describes identity in the western sense as being equated to the essence of a person or a group of people.

The outward emanations of this essence therefore function to inform others about what and who a person is, it denotes both their status in society and their individuality, what is sometimes referred to as a selfhood. This identity, a co-product of classical citizenry, theological notions of the soul and bourgeois notions of autonomy and self-actualisation, coalesces and solidifies into the figure of the unique and self-affirming individual, a concept that even today, in a mature capitalist, liberal democracy, seems to many entirely 'natural' and positive. (p. 11)

In the previous example, Novotná describes this 'natural' process as being 'normal.' Exemplifying identity and being *different* in relation to an 'other' is reflected on in another way by Malek,

Identity is about relationship between 'I' (subject) and 'You' (object). 'I' means the intern(al) world and 'You' means the extern(al) world of an individual. The extern(al) world includes people, objects, all the stuff around the individual. The relationship between intern(al) and extern(al) world express Identity. So Identity is not just about the 'I'. I regard the relationship as an own part of life, just as well as 'I' and 'You'. For me identity shows itself best when there is an equal importance between I, You and the relationship (we).

But what happens if the circumstances are different? For example: what happens if the extern(al) world has so many changing influences, that it's just not possible to have a relationship with all of them or the relationship exists between a lot of stuff but it can't be very intensive because of all its dimensions? The result is that the relationship turns into distance and emptiness. The consequence is that 'I' and 'You' are distanced. Furthermore it is difficult to express identity and because of that it's difficult to reflect and react. There is less development without the relationship. I have to mention that distance is also the expression of an individual, but distance can't show the diversity of the individual, it just shows that there isn't any relationship (HU5, P12: Malek, 2007).

The above passage offers an interesting insight into the way distance is conceptualized and works individually between people as an interpersonal, social semiotic. 'Other' is *different* from the subject/object relations of 'we.' Interestingly, her discourse makes the 'other' person an 'object' instead of another subject, already distancing 'it'. As Jaros (2005) points out, already the Kantian autonomy of subject and object has been rendered unhelpful by the material condition of the contemporary world, which are better

understood as assemblages that owe their existence to dynamic rather than static qualities. "Hence 'thingness' is better thought of as a 'dynamic capacity to be affected and affecting', to behave or act or be treated as an object' (p. 2). The above text hints at the notion of assemblage by the failed 'we'.

Different also comes up also in relationship to ways of thinking and working with images artistically. In the following passage, Černočová reflects on advertising images that participants had altered artistically from an image they disliked into an image that was liked.

Madla cut her image into pieces, so that nobody could see, what it was. Then she glued the pieces onto a green paper. It looked much more friendly, like bubbles or something. She changed the horrible scene into a friendly one. You hid the two naked girls by a lot of pictures. In context with the only word 'fakt' it meant for me that there are many much more real things than the two artificial bodies.

Matisse had a very sad image. She took the saddest piece of it, the unborn elephant-baby, and she made a king of it. It was very impressive for me. She took a being that was totally abused, hurt and tortured, and promoted it to a noble person. Maybe it is more than what we could do with the real dead elephant. You could only bury it. But with changing the image she showed a lot of emotions, compassion... It is only a piece of paper, but it was very strong for me.

Maybe the different ways of changing the images could reflect the different ways, how people deal with the things, which they don't like. Sometimes we are doing, as if we don't see it. Sometimes we damage the thing we don't like. Sometimes we start to explore it and sometimes we start to change it into a better thing. (HU4, P6: Černočová, 2007)

There are many discourses in the above passage that weave together into a meta-cognition of the process itself and its results through a felt experience that is both intimate and personal. At the same time, it is possible to experience her interpretive lenses in relationship to the activity of intentionally seeking to transform a disliked image. Her reflection shows what the process means to her, not only in relationship to her own image but to those of the 'others.'

These examples illustrate the complexity when analyzing writing in terms of the specifics of language as text, and the possibility for misinterpretation and incoherency when text is

only internally related to itself and other texts by keyword coding. While all three examples were coded with 'different' quotations with Atlas.ti, they refer to very 'different' connotations and denotations of its reference. It is for this reason, that situating coding within the con/text of its originating factors is an essential part of discourses' interpretive framework.

In the following sections, I weave discourses from various supercodes to realize their voices within their transactive networks.

UnCertain States of America

Playing with the intersection between cultural codes of reality and certainty, the *Uncertain States of America: American Art in the 3rd Millennium exhibition* (Galerie Rudolfinum, 2007-8, was a two-year project by three European curators compiling recent evolutions in art by a new generation of American artists, most of whom were born after 1970 (Galerie Rudolfinum, 2007). As the curators write in the forward to the exhibition *Reader*:

Images without text are embarrassing, like a naked person in a public space. At the very least they need a textual bikini...(in the worst case this can read 'untitled.') (Uncertain States of America Reader, 2006, p. 6).

But an undergraduate student from Finland, reacted to this differently:

Everything is uncertain...so why even give a name for your work? I didn't like it. I think that every artist should take (an) opportunity to add some extra (deeper meaning) to the work. Words are wonderful tools...So reading: Untitled is not what I wish to see/ (HU5, Lindstrom, 2007).

The tension between her own encoded rules of art where meaning is expected to be prompted by curatorial and artistic texts, provokes irritation when experiencing its absence. Responding to the same situation differently, another student writes:

It's there. It exists. It's real. It's a result. We can perceive it (HU5, Poulsen, 2007).

Sharing differences as well as contemplating one's own opinion, creates a space where insights are generated from a collective process circulating between the individual and the group. This is a polyvocality.

The following participant's texts are taken from reflections written before, during and after encountering the Uncertain States exhibition:

First of all, growing up in a society where individuality is appreciated, I like when art doesn't look like anything I've seen before. The more personal, the better." (HU5, Del Priore, 2007).

But at the exhibition, she observes these feelings and thoughts in herself as she walks through the various rooms before our group discussion:

Confusing. Is this art? Irritation. What does it mean? What are the curators' thoughts by putting these pieces together? (HU5, Del Priore, 2007)

She is unable to enact the openness that she thinks she has. Her feelings reflect a certain discomfort. On her exhibition worksheet she writes, "I interpret the title as saying, that there is really nothing certain to be said about America." (HU5, Del Priore, 2007). But in follow-up reflective writing she considers why she reacted the way she did:

When reading the curators text before entering the exhibition, my attention was drawn towards finding something which fit their description:

"The exhibition curators believe that in the period where the official political culture of the United States is viewed with great skepticism on the other side of the Atlantic , it seems important to remind ourselves of the complexity and at the same time variety of the American artistic scene."

....but no matter how hard I tried, I could not find the many pieces in the exhibition to have the society critic in common. That of course annoyed me, cause what was then the purpose of the mixing of these pieces of art?...But then again, my interpretation was totally influenced on the curators text and what it had narrowed my attention down to.

And then it hit me that maybe that was exactly the purpose of it - that there was none. The diversity of the pieces became the point to me. In the beginning I was looking for a literal critic towards the American society, but maybe the critic lie(s) in the variety of the art pieces – showing that you cannot generalize on an entire country – that there is no one way of thinking or doing a thing. In that way the art, to me, came to comment on society by commenting on itself really. (HU5, P:55, Del Priore, 2007).

By analyzing the meaning she gave the text, and what *"it had narrowed"* her attention (down) to, she was able to see how her expectations directly affected her experience and

perception. Through these texts it is possible to see how her own *movement of becoming aware* of the source of her irritation and confusion unfolds. In doing so, she is able to move from an initial emotional reaction to a creative insight: that the work is, “...commenting on society by commenting on itself.” This is a meta-level cognition that emerges from the dialogic and reflective inquiry process she has engaged in.

In contra-distinction from the true-false argument of propositional logic, Kristeva’s (1986) discussion of the *true-real* (*vréel*), illustrates how the ‘narrowing down’ process works by naming what something *is* and giving it inherency. Philosophically, from the time of Plato, has been the attempt to give namelessness a name. ‘...the *truth* they seek (to say) is the *real*, that is, the ‘true-real’ [*vréel*] (p. 216). Real and true morph together within the conditional apparatus of naming something *as itself*. The true-real has an ‘is-ness’ that assumes transcendence. Irony is the antidote for its condition, and becomes a tool for its subversion. Kristeva (1986) calls us to,

...refuse all roles to summon this ‘truth’ situated outside time, a truth that is neither true nor false, that cannot be fitted into the order of speech and social symbolism, that is an echo of our jouissance, our mad words, our pregnancies. But how can we do this? By listening; by recognizing the unspoken in all discourse, however Revolutionary, by emphasizing at each point whatever remains unsatisfied, repressed, new, eccentric, incomprehensible, that which disturbs the mutual understanding of the established powers (p. 156).

This listening to the unspoken is a recognition of the force of language and thought that is not just a *chora*.

In contemporary art, it could be said that it is often the ‘true-fake’ operating, such as in the video, *Killer Shrimps* in the *Uncertain States of America* exhibit [Figure 41]

, recontextualizing a popular American horror film, *Halloween* and its devices that generate fear. The *true-fake* can even be seen in the construction the previous student created, interpreting what she expected the exhibition

was. After the exhibition, three students analyzed videos from the exhibition as part of



Figure 42: Detail from *Killer Shrimps*. Tipton (2008)

their final project. *Collect*, as a code in the text sample for power relationships, related to discussion around the status given to collecting material objects, which appeared in discussion about a small group project analyzing three video's from the *Uncertain States of America* exhibition (Galerie Rudolfinum, 2007-8). In working with Jennifer Bornstein's 1994 video, *Collector's Favorites*, Del Priore states,

The video is made to look like a TV- show. But is it a real TV-show from the nineties, which has now been recontextualized as a part of the USA - exhibition? If the video was actually a real TV-show, the recontextualisation would be on another level than if the show was already a piece of art, reborn in a new century and in the context of the USA - exhibition. That you are able to doubt if this was originally a piece of art says a lot about contemporary art, I think (HU5, P25, Del Priore, 2007).

Collector's Favorites is an example of how the ubiquity of moving images in the cultural context, tends to form the iconic frame for interpreting an image *as itself*, which the artist uses as a narrative device for the work of art. The student is unsure whether the work parodies an actual TV show, but she is aware of how the context operates to elicit an unanticipated response.

Different types of garbage, food and words are talked about and presented with big enthusiasm by both Jennifer and Sally. Most people would not consider these things as worth even talking about. But when you see the value Jennifer and Sally puts into it, it has an effect on you. You want to find out why they find it so fascinating. And suddenly it becomes interesting to you too, due to their story and relation to the things. The beauty is relational (HU5, P25: Del Priore, 2007).

Drawing her analysis back to the previous exhibition at Hunt Kastner Artworks, she continues to make the relational point stronger:

I also think you can compare collectors' favorites to Jirí Skála's 12 photographs of industrial machines. The machines are normally known as ugly, but when someone puts value into them, they become beautiful. In the same way Jennifer puts value into things like waste, which you would normally not care about, by organizing and presenting them on big boards (HU5, P25: Del Priore, 2007).

Del Priore is aware of the devices that are used in the video to change her opinion about items that would be considered garbage in another context. She makes connections with a previous exhibition where the artist intentionally drew upon the same dynamic articulated in an Eco text. Her net(work) of relationships between these different events grows through the reflective process.

Group dialogue after her oral presentation is a vehicle for extending her network of relationships further. Responding to her presentation, the group discusses the video's parody of art collecting and popular culture collecting as practices that reveal social values of identity, status, value, and power attributed to collecting material objects as an investment. This discursive layer, is not initially seen by the participant, even though she draws upon the fifteenth and sixteenth century phenomenon of 'cabinets of curiosities', as indispensable to forming a 'Kunstkammer' or art collection in her analysis

I think parallels can be drawn from the cabinets of curiosities to the collecting in collectors' favorites. The two ways of collecting are very different, but it is still collecting. And the difference in the collecting from the renaissance and the collecting in collectors' favorites I think says a lot about changing values and relation to things. The objects in the wunderkammers were often owned by people with money. Today we would regard the objects as being separate, because they often had no relation to each other, but were valuable one by one. In collectors' favorites it is just the opposite. Here the pieces have no value without other pieces of its kind. And here the collected items are free or at least of a small cost. It tells me something about peoples relationship to material things have changed from more objective to more subjective (HU5, P25: Del Priore, 2007).

In the above analysis, her reasoning in combination with regulatory discourses that posit correctness, shows some of the barriers to proprioception Bohm (1994) identified, when she compares and analyzes the video from the point of view of its literalized content – as its iconic representation, and not from the parody of popular culture collecting (i.e. baseball cards, bric-a-brac, magazines, sets of objects such as china dogs, lawn ornaments, etc., as social practices derivative of other hierarchies of collecting).

Parody as a discourse, is not apprehended directly by any of the participants, even though most of them have seen the popular culture television show, *Roadside Attraction*, which appeared culturally in the USA at the time Bornstein made her video. *Roadside Attraction*, as a popular culture venue for identifying antiques within household collectibles, is a television show reproduced in Denmark and Finland within their own cultural contexts. Del Priore's final comment in her paper,

The girl in the video is called Jennifer, and so is the artist of the video as well. Maybe it is herself? Maybe it is herself starring in a TV-show thirteen years ago and now putting in to another context? Or maybe the examples of the names is

just made to point out that the Jennifer in the video represents the artist thoughts? (HU5, P25: Del Priore, 2007).

While she has chosen to make these queries within a historical framework of interpretation, she has not taken time to answer her own questions, leaving the analysis fragmented and incomplete. She is aware of this when she concludes, "...I think collectors' favorite(s) is a very complex piece of art with many layers, not obvious to make meaning out of." (ibid).

McCarthy (2001)'s study of the daily experience of television shaping private and public spaces with out-of-home television networks in shopping malls, airports, bars, public transportation, and public schools, examines the complex matrixes of expressions and practices of social power, ideology, and audience formation within the politics of spectatorship. It is possible to see some of television's conditioning operating within Del Priore's discourse.

In this instance, as in other texts by Del Priore, it is important to remember Bohm's (1980) caution that no particular statement is relevant or irrelevant per se, but is an expression of a particular instance of an individual's own process. In this situation, my role as instructor calls for me being a bridge between former regulatory discourses requiring certitude, conformity, and relevance (under threat of punishment), to new, open system, rhizomatic spaces. Affirming the legitimacy of the individual process is an intuitive process, supporting where they are now while guiding and nurturing the possibility of how their process can deepen and manifest further.

Apprehension, as Baker, Jensen, and Kolb (2002) describe, is an immediate, tacit, feeling-oriented and subjective process that is interactively related to a linguistic, conceptual interpretive process (p. 8). Dialogically, apprehension works relationally between all participants. In conversation together, new layers of meaning are revealed and connected to previous conceptualizations, demonstrating the empowerment of dialogic inquiry to develop new competencies in conversational learning processes. Of this kind of learning, "...follows a rhythm of taking in and putting out, of incorporating

ideas and experience to find meaning and expressing that meaning in thought, speech and action (Baker, Jensen, & Kolb, 2002, p. 10).

An example of how conversational learning is extended from the previous dialogue, in her reflection of the same session, Malek compares Del Priore's video analysis to a content analysis by Černochová. Černochová presented a content analysis of incidents and kinds of poses between male and female images in a recent issue of a local, popular culture magazine, *Reflex*. In Černochová's presentation, cut outs of all male and female images from the magazine were laid out and grouped according to her categorization scheme.

After the research- presentation of Pavla, the presentation of Sara 'collectors' favorites and the discussion about this ironic imitation of real videos, I had a few thoughts about the sense of collecting stuff.

When is a collection of things good and not ridiculous? Is a collection of paper cups worse than a collection of smiling faces in magazines? It seems that it's not about the things we collect, but about the intention, the result and the transfer in real life. Pavla was focused on the aim to understand the structure of our nowadays influences and consequences, so she collected picture(s) that show her the relation between man and woman and their status in society. Is Jennifer focused on the aim to understand the structure of our nowadays influences and consequences? I think Jennifer isn't interested in the consequences and the meaning of her collection. Probably she is just focused on the act of collecting. Is this video so ridiculous because the critical reflection and the transfer to change something in daily life (is) missing? (And for sure the connection between Jennifer and the moderator attributes to this funny video) (HU5, P5: Malek, 2007).

Like Del Priore, Malek is literalizing the content of the video as a 'real' or 'serious' collection. Her discourse reframes meaning from prior knowledge and its iconography, to power structures that operate in the socio-cultural sphere and their influence on understanding the language of irony. But like the other participant, she does not yet connect her query to the perspective that the absence of what she is looking for, is the point of the video's parody. On the other hand, Pavla has introduced a new concept to us all, that of 'the smiling idiots,' a sub-category of types of smiling faces she found in her analysis of the popular culture magazine, *Reflex*, (13/2007) which ties the perceived irony of the video together [Figure 43].

High School Discourses

Approaching the same artistic, dialogic and reflective writing tasks, high school students on the other hand, generally want to experience art on their own terms. Not as encoded with art history expectations for what work 'should' look like, they commonly literalize icons through associations from socio-cultural and media experiences. They may not be as motivated (or interested) to analyze what is behind their preferences or codes. Impressions are spontaneous and immediate. Choosing a favorite

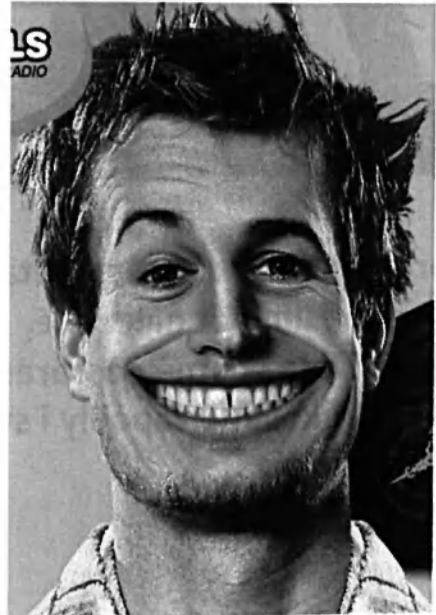


Figure 43: 'Smiling Idiot' from Impulse Ad Reflex (13/2007)

work to write about, one high school girl says of Anthony Burdin's installation, *Voodoo Room* (2005):

There was darkness. I heard scary noises and I was a little bit frightened. There was a big mirror. I am afraid of mirrors. There was blood on it. I like the feeling to be frightened." (HU6, 2C, 2008).

Relationships to visibility are personal. A first year art student writes, "Primarily I felt certain suffering and pain from the works." (HU6, 1A, 2007) but she doesn't know why – or how. About Christian Holstad's, *Micro Phonic Fields of Corn Consumed by the Plague*,

a second-year high school art student writes with more detail [Figure 44]:

This art shows the nature together with technology. I like it very much. It has beautiful color and the corn is very nice. It has very interesting shape and that makes the art exciting.” (HU6, 2C, 2008).



Figure 44: High school student examines Holstad's work. Tipton (2008)

An example of how the iconic is literalized as a *true-fake*, a high school student writes about Frank Benson's naked replica of himself with silver and copper patina, “My first emotion is...incredible. I (am) seeing the statue *is* alive. But it isn't true, it is a perfect replica.” (HU6, 2C, 2008). Here, the lifelike impression of the body gives the illusion that the statue is a ‘real’ person, which it is a representation of. Other students, however, respond with different coding. “The guy seems to be bad. He's ugly, I would give him (a) nicer face” (HU6, 2C, 2008). “He looked like an alien. He was smooth and shin(y) and that's what I hated about him” (HU6, 2C, 2008). Sometimes liking and disliking works of art are generated by hidden rules and codes that remain seemingly undetectable to even the person using them. [Figure 45]



Figure 45: Frank Benson's sculpture of himself at Galerie Rudolfinum. Černochová (2008)

Parodying the ‘true-fake’ of the media *performing* artists, is the installation, *Top Cruise*, by Mick Bouchet (2005) with 1000 versions of a decapitated, bright pink head of Tom Cruise repeating itself across the floor [Figure 46]. One student writes:

I think it's very strange and he doesn't look like in reality. And why they pick Tom Cruise? He is just an actor.” (HU6, 2D, 2008)

How media identifies a face and then multiplies it, creating false impressions of familiarity as if *knowing* someone, is a sophisticated discursive layer not immediately apparent to

her in the work. Parody and irony as two kinds of discourses dominated the diverse work in the exhibition. But both are also discursive layers that require knowing what is being parodied. It can be said that the tendency to ‘read’ imagery iconically pre-dominates even at the university level.

Drawn to the works that look the most familiar to what they are used to seeing, their art teacher, Dr. Kitzbergova explains, “They are closed to things that are not about their world. They see things only important to them as they are now,” (Kitzbergova, personal communication, February 15, 2008). This is apparent when one student writes about Aaron Young’s, *Never Work*. “I like it because it looks like a modern art – graffiti. I think it is near to teenager life and I’m teenager.” (HU6, 2B, 2008). Referencing Mario Ybarra, Jr’s, *Dance to a Different Drum Machine*, one student writes, “This work it’s such interesting because it hasn’t any order and no meaning. This work looks like my life.” (HU6, 2B, 2008). Through inquiry processes, diverse experiences, experiments, reflection, and dialogue, icons begin to lose their literal ‘reality’ and become increasingly perceived as contextual devices.



Figure 46: Mike Bouchet (2005) *Top Cruise* at Galerie Rudolfinum, Prague. Černochová, (2008)

For both high school and under/graduates, frustration and ‘negative’ responses were elicited when meaning was not apparent or ‘given’. As one undergraduate student reflects about that, “Bad/good thing...is that it gives you lot(s) of question(s).” (HU5, Lindstrom, 2007).

Rodowick’s (2001) term for the ‘between-world’ space, *the figural*, is the place high school students seem to easily inhabit. The figural is not necessary representational, nor linguistically described. It is a non-dualistic space that operates throughout the order of

language but is not tied to its signification. How we pay attention to this space is an essential aspect of new discourse in art and cultural education. This is why Rodowick's concept of *the figural* is so important. *The figural* repositions non-dualistic knowing and experiencing back into arts and cultural discourse (Fulková & Tipton, 2008, p. 32). Interaction with the work in the exhibit illustrated how familiarity with cultural norms, socio-cultural milieus, and media culture creates a way of knowing that is not transparent to people from other cultural contexts and experience. Demonstrating how *the figural* functioned in their 'felt' experience became an element within their own neo-narratives,

ACTIVATING CREATIVITY THROUGH NEW INTERDEPENDENCIES

Implications of the Study

What happens when students and teachers alike try to understand how they encode and decode visual experiences in contemporary society, and they relate this semiotic to artistic experiences and contemporary art practice? This study gives further support to the research that learners naturally tend to adopt semiotic methods as a means of interpretation both in life in general and in art (Fulkova & Tipton, 2008).

In considering *how coding systems operate* from the standpoints of students as much as those of scholars, teachers, and art professionals, we connect practices, knowledges, and individuals that are traditionally kept hermetically apart. This dialogue, based around student perspectives on contemporary art, is designed to establish something more than what Giroux called a “third space” - a place where dominant and marginalized voices come together (Giroux, 1983). It is intended as a space from which creative potential, a force sometimes named *the figural*, emerges and where many worlds coexist. This is the *empowerment* of discourse realizing its dialogic potential.

Answering Duncum's call for a new paradigm of thinking for arts education (2002), my findings echo the professional demands that have come in recent years for a restructuring of arts education and pre-service curriculum to include different approaches to the critical presentation of visual culture. This critical perspective, I believe, is embodied in curricula that explore individual processes of semiosis within the culture of contemporary art. These approaches apply emerging socio-cultural theories with the aim of extending our engagements with the visualities of contemporary lived experiences. As such, they enable and encourage students to bring the authority of their own voices to the current cultural conversation.

These pedagogical reforms are especially urgent at a time when many students are experiencing a crisis of faith in our curricula. Old systems of meaning have lost their relevance, regardless of how well they have been (re)conceptualized, preserved, or admired. Young people come into academic systems that are divorced from the world in which they function and live. As Kitzbergova (2008) notes about one of her classes:

They are angry. They want to know the formula how to live. They want to be told but don't know how to find it. (Kitzbergova, personal communication, February 15, 2008)

These students are keenly looking for authentic experience. Education is necessary, but more important for them is having a sense of its actual function, answering Sedgwick's question, 'What does it do?', and not just taking note of the criteria that it should achieve. By engaging with students' current experiences and insights, or what Sternberg (2003) calls their 'tacit knowledge', we chart a way out of this impasse. Sternberg's 'balance theory of wisdom' recognizes the value of tacit knowledge alongside intelligence and creativity as attributes needed to bridge personal interests with common good outcomes. Honoring tacit knowledge clears the way for students to query the cultural displacement of such individual awareness; it leads them to ask critical questions about where sanctioned knowledge comes from, how it is gained, and what function it serves. This discourse around power relationships brings to light much that may have previously been invisible in the systems circumscribing the production and beneficiaries of knowledge. It is a discussion that is increasingly paramount in a world where the challenges of future sustainability are present daily, and activities of the 'knowledge-based economy' all too easily align to sustain current corporate and economic control paradigms.

Working to engage students' tacit knowledge of visual culture means ensuring that our pre-service educators have adequate tools and strategies. This study is based on an awareness that we have still not asked that educators occupy their cultural self-location, and it provides a framework for such undertakings – in dialogic inquiry and reflective practice within a constructivist setting. In this way, it opens a space for a teacher-driven curriculum that emphasizes the sets of relationships the learner brings to curricular

experiences, and assumes individual intention and choice to be essential aspects of knowledge construction and use. As Malek reflects:

The reflective process add(s) new perspectives of thinking and perception to my thinking. To write thoughts down makes thinking more significant and serious. It needs also braveness to write this thinking, because it's not common to speak about the(se) processes. Reflective process makes the development conscious and shows positions and thinking can change and that no thinking is definite (HU5, P14: Malek, 2007).

In design and execution, this educational toolkit reaches beyond constructivism - towards a liberating education, where both teachers and students learn together. Paulo Freire has called this a social act: "Liberating education is a social process of illumination." (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 109).

For teachers who are willing and able to stand aside and beside their students as colleagues, mentors, and peers, the roles of guiding and following lose their foregrounded or backgrounded significance and instead shift between the necessities of experience and expectation in the accomplishment of mutual agreements, missions, intentions and plans. All participants in a complex and increasingly interactive technological age, educators and students benefit from taking an interdisciplinary approach to visual culture, drawing on diverse modes of thinking, perception, learning, and cognition, or what Cope and Kalantzis term 'multiliteracies' (2000). This move implicitly involves making the shift from a restricted focus on visual images and objects to a multimodal understanding of *visual encounters*. In doing so, it poses a challenge to the tenets of arts education, examined and queried in pedagogical settings through a dialogue of inductive and deductive inquiries – and transcognitive responses.

My findings in this study have promising applications for students, teachers, curriculum designers, policy advocates, and administrators interested in visual culture. Among its major implications are critical changes to the form, content, and process of pre-service education, arts education pedagogy, and instructional design decisions. Based on research with pre-service teachers and high school students, my work extends into and beyond K-12 arts education classrooms, and also lays the grounds for the development of learning

strategies based on visual semiosis in other areas of primary and secondary curricula. Positive use of this pedagogical framework with international art/education students supports its future inclusion and expansion in a variety of undergraduate and graduate programs of arts education and visual culture/studies. The applicability of this study may also extend to its inclusion within the Art and Culture modules developed by the Department of Art Education in collaboration with the new European Union's Teacher Certification program, piloting in the Fall 2008 at the University College Sealand, Denmark and to be implemented in Fall 2009 (www.ucsj.dk/eteps). As part of the study involves gallery settings, museum educators will find support for the framing of contemporary art exhibitions into the realm of the learning participant through visual semiosis, dialogic inquiry, and reflective practice.

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Underlying my research and practice is an affirmation of the need for *re-enlightenment* about the meaning and purpose of engagement in the creative process. Unlike past enlightenments, this change does not draw on the logic of binary oppositions, exclusions, and self-certainty. In fact, if anything, it comes from an appreciation of the damage and danger created by this kind of knowledge as we find ourselves at the brink of ecological and nuclear destruction. It derives, in particular, from an awareness of the unique environment of each individual's thoughts – a terrain that is endless, surprising, and unmappable in its depths.

These landscapes of the individual can only be explored through conjecture, a slow, unfolding process that rationalist scientists tend to dismiss for its variability and uncertainty. And, thus, I would suggest that it is uncertainty itself which we can use as an empowering force, and one that helps us map our cultural self-location. Uncertainty is, at its core, a creative and world-making process that puts certainty in its place as merely one possible and limiting standpoint. In place of the rigid rules and exclusions which modernist science imposes on our world, uncertainty offers the possibility of transformation through the cultivation of a new space. This creativity exists in the aliveness and meanings which each individual brings to word and image. Awakened as it

may be in art education, it is, thus, crucial to individual holistic development and the construction of new social insights and communities.

Can we instill faith in creativity and uncertainty into our classrooms? Can we engage with that which is unknown with a sense of self-reflection and wonder? For now, I ask that we stop and attempt to listen in between the space of the silence and the spoken. In this work, I suggest that educators bring this understanding to bear in helping students to encounter their own meaning-meaning processes – an undertaking which upholds the value of the cognitive and creative processes that comprise art itself. It is art, in this rich sense, that lies at the heart of arts education and that risks being lost if we slip into a morass of equivalences between all visualities. Art can be taught, nurtured, guided, stimulated, or stunted. But one thing art needs and requires is doing.

Conclusions

Cultivating a readiness to dispense with the dominant paradigm requires first accepting it as it is. For those willing to venture into uncharted territory, there is discomfort to be expected. This is the problem and the journey that we face when setting out to rethink entrenched responses to creativity and arts education.

For those of us following these paths now, part of the learning lies – perhaps ironically – in developing a readiness to experiment with not knowing. This is the first step that reveals a will to search for other kinds of experience being beyond those that are currently familiar and supported. This process, by its very nature, cannot take place except as an encounter. It is a dialogic engagement, a self-reflective and collaborative enquiry that takes place between a self and ‘other’, unearthing a rich and fertile ground for insights.

Dialogic communication strategies have been endorsed by educators and participants because of their ability to bridge and build relationships across the cross-cultural and diverse knowledge systems of today’s learners and wider communities. By including individuals, we allow them to voice their multi-modal viewpoints in interaction with others. ‘Inclusion’ in this sense goes beyond variously defined differences or enacted preferences, to an understanding that every person is uniquely diverse. It can be achieved by valuing and giving space for individual interpretations of personal experience and providing opportunities for the individual’s active engagement in the construction of their own meaning and knowledge. Considered as a social endeavor, it provides a site where social understandings can be explored, cultural relationships examined, and a systems view of the context established. Creatively, it reveals its dimensions through the interactions between structure, content, and participation within any particular space, activity or experience (Fulková & Tipton, 2008).

In the context of visual culture and arts education, this kind of dialogue is especially

revealing because of the way that all representations contain multiple codes and subcodes, and hence, multiple sign systems actively under interpretation. The visual encounter is, thus, a kind of social semiosis, taking in the world and a variety of languages, only some of which are oral and written. Among the factors driving new discourses is attention to the meaning of personal experiences and their contribution to the development of new knowledge about arts education. Moving beyond postmodernism, gallery, and art educators face the challenge to place experiences of objects, images, and performances in a new context – an open or alternative space where the individual and art environment can meet. In doing so, these organizers acknowledge the diversity of individuals who weave together inside an experience of art, and they rescue works from a narrow institutional reception.

More than simply decoding and encoding, encounters with contemporary visual culture framed through dialogues reveal what is known and *how it is exchanged* – within oneself, with others, and within the context of the social field. Critical inquiry with visual culture/s facilitates not just a learner-centered model, but a semiotic co-construction, where meanings and knowledges are created by all participants within a diverse community of learners. Such meanings emerge not by consensus model, but in a field co-habited with diverse ways of knowing and communities of practices.

If, then, we wish to create and maintain a pedagogy based on dialogue, this will depend on the presence of certain conditions: the opening up of discussion and shared agreements about the dialogue's content and conditions, including group expectations; tabling of assumptions, and terms of conduct; a commitment to respect and listening according to the rules of group process; and agreed upon methods and processes of conflict resolution. Acknowledging creative aspects of conflict is a key strategy in making the transition from polarization to the acceptance of difference. Explicit shared agreements may set out attitudinal rules reflecting declared values, i.e. freedom of expression and its limits; statements of respect, equality, and fairness; an affirmation of the validity of personal opinions; and agreed upon ways in which group members can address lapses and violations of their agreed parameters. Being willing to question the

kinds of questions are and how they are put is a necessity for any reflexive praxis. In this sense, discourse and dialogue both require a kind of *respons-ability* – the ability to respond directly and sincerely with one other because the life of any group is created by the individuals who comprise it.

If we understand that our individual welfare depends on the welfare of others, then perhaps we will not perceive others' voices as problematic even when they are most didactic and fundamentally opposed to our own. Educators with a critical pedagogy perspective can consciously use dialogue as a method to reveal inequities in power relationships and address the damage that they cause. This can assist in the ongoing process of transitioning from a situation where decisions are hierarchically imposed on the individual and the collective from outside – a situation that clearly reinforces feelings of disempowerment. To sustain this work, the discourse must move away from binary oppositions to holonomy, a place that has yet to appear in a practical sense inside of institutions. This is a place where theoretical conceptions chart a path of emergent futures – a place where oppositional dynamics of duality are not discarded but used within the framework and structure of another perspective that is not our own. It is a space, in short, of the *beside* that alternative ways of knowing bring to this discursive structure. For this *beside* place, there is no better strategy than the creative activating of contemporary art practice:

The power of spoken discourse to reveal the potency of contemporary art and culture lies in the fact of its interactivity, its diverse interfaces with others and the symbolic coding that is developed, decoded, and restructured so that it ultimately transcends prior knowledge and reinvents new knowledge and experience from their interplay (Fulkova and Tipton, 2008, p. 39).

A critical discourse requires understanding and support of the overriding interconnectivity between signs, events, and activities, interpretations, and relationships. It will set out to explore the infinite ways that these objects extend in both spirals and lattices, all of which are all metaphorically rhizomatic and take forms that vary between instructional, interpersonal, institutional, or artistic encounters. Once it is understood that all sign events are interpretations of constructions, even the so-called imperialism of science or any other -ism, will lose its privileged status. It will be then that interlocutors

and academics of all kinds can begin to do what children do naturally when they learn: play.

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What emerges most compellingly from this kind of reflection on arts education practice is our need for a new conception of creativity, or if you like, a new creative science. Creativity has its own unique rules and dynamics. It cannot be known solely in opposition or through distinctions. It calls for integration by a different kind of faith that comes not from the certainty of facts or an imagined transcendent reality, but from another kind of truth – one that relates to all that cannot be proven by the self-certitude of empirical science, and a creative force that is yet to be fully recognized or used effectively. For who among us has been taught to understand and listen to the languages of the elements, the communication of water, the aliveness of trees, or how to read the records and information of stones? Who knows not only how to read these things, but how to listen and respond, absorbing and applying a wordless knowledge? Theories of clinical pathology have sadly created strange borders against which ‘normalcy’ is supposed to function, and inside which those who have sensed other ways of knowing are contained.

Creativity relies on case exceptions, non-categorical associations, illogical propositions, anomalies, and the ability to develop and design novel disassociations. Using rationalist science to create theories to explain the products of artistic processes is therefore a deeply ironic and often tragic disjunction. While it may satisfy the wishes of some to know what others have produced, the need to rationally explain all visible phenomena within a known universe is a type of mind game that plays with the elements of its teleology, constructing moves, strategies and conducting proofs.

In terms of art, most of all, where the limits of the rational mind fail more often than not to control the outcomes of behavior or thought, there is a certain mythology that the sciences are intrinsically relevant and necessary to understanding and experience. Who are psychological theories of art’s origins for, and what purpose do they serve? This may be a question for critical discourse analysis since the psychology of art is most

useful not in its deciphering of imagery or artistic drives, but in exploring the relationship between the images and identities of art's producers and the identity-forming process that each participant contributes to the image's experience in the world.

Today's art is more of an event than an experience with an object. Technology has greatly changed the realm of the possible. The older, two-dimensional model assumed certain relationships that have since been fractured. Just as it is a categorical error to use the rules applicable in one dimension to judge the contents of another, so too do we find ourselves today at a disjunction between the artistic moment in which we find ourselves and former evaluative and interpretive constructs. The purpose and values, means and methods of production and consumption of art encounters have drastically changed, but we since the sixteenth century we have been using the same rigid pedagogies and models based on evolutionary positions to interpret phenomena that cannot be represented or contained by them.

What can we make them of the future and creativity and arts education? Despite all else, our capacity for responsiveness remains untempered and it is reflected in our ability to regenerate in the face of life difficulties and challenges. It is this - our capacity for creative imagination and creative perception – that gives us the seeds which produce new forms, new patterns, and new ways of relating to the information that is patterned around us. This creative force, resonating through art's capacity to touch and be touched inside a network of complex relationships, appears to us continually through factors that logic, and rational thinking alone cannot harness. At stake here is an ongoing interactive process between each individual life and a larger, universal network informing and renewing the contents of any artistic process and intention. What one individual knows is never a totality, even when it is most convincingly communicated as such. It is from inside group processes that we see how the voice that is spoken by each participant contributes to the collective knowing. This process requires surrendering to a force and acknowledging a process greater than ourselves into which we enter and swim. I call this creative *intelligence*.

This study has been conducted at an opportune and critical historical moment. Arts education has the opportunity to join in the well-developed critical discourse by adding its own languages of possibility. This contribution need not take place just through the operation of semantic play in mental models structured in theories, but through an engagement in the creative process itself with its own unimaginable inventiveness.

For this reason, there is no need to put arts education explicitly in the service of social reconstructivism, which tends to operate as yet another kind of instrumentalism. If within the models and processes of arts education, where a plurality of perspectives and approaches can flourish, the individual is empowered to recognize how their own interpretive framework of perceptions and experience is conditioned on the social and cultural sphere, and if they are so motivated to experiment with changing it, then institutions and educators have a role to guide and assist them in finding a set of tools to study how this framework works and how it can be changed. This principle reflects *agency as change*. Empowerment then, is the outcome of dialogue and reflective practice. As Freire points out (Horton & Freire, 1990), there is no creativity without rupturing old patterns, (p. 38). Ultimately, we must “look for a process” (p. 40), and “unlearn” the old one (p. 41). Our institutions of learning have taken us away from our experiential understanding of *how* people learn. Until this changes, we can only embark individually and collectively on a journey to find a voice in ourselves and others.

Oppositional debate sharpens thinking, experience and perspectives within the arts education community and among artists. It can trigger an important research movement, but our attention must not stop and stay there. No one person, philosophy, theory, or idea can capture the various possibilities for thought, feeling, and perception. Within the larger international community of people engaged in many different aspects of redesigning the role and structure of education today, there is hope for innovation and creative ideas to seed new ways of relating to the visual encounter of art and to reach other. Reconsidering the nature of interpretation is a creative act. Suspending the constraints of both personal and historical conditioning, and supporting a new paradigm that moves beyond theorizing to investing in creativity, will alter the structure and focus

of schooling. A key step here is a shift in attention from institutionalized structures to the development of self-directed learning processes and systems, whose design parameters and dimensions of practice are more closely aligned with individualized goals, intentions, and choices.

I hope that my contribution offers brings a fresh perspective and new depth to what has come before in approaches to arts education, while illuminating new possibilities for what the future holds. At no other time in history has our potential to re-invent ourselves and our world ever been so urgent - or so possible. As part of this process, I dedicate my work to the emergence and unfolding of arts education's own *movement of becoming*.

Notes:

¹ Parts of this section were published in: Fulková, M., & Tipton, T. (2008). (Con)text for new discourse as semiotic praxis. *International Journal of Art and Design Education* 27(1), 27-42.

² Parts of this section were published in: Tipton, T. (2007). Redefining inclusion: Bringing dialogic practice into programs for gallery and museum education. Aktuální otázky zprostředkování umění" Teorie a praxe galerijní pedagogiky, vizuální kultura a výtvarná výchova. Brno: Masarykova Univerzita, Pedagogická Fakulta, Katedra výtvarné výchovy.

³ Perkins' elaboration of thinking dispositions for developing intelligences is drawn from his early collaboration with Gardner and draws heavily on Kolb's model of experiential learning (1984) which Bernice McCarthy adapted into her 4-Mat system, 1987.

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